

Preparing for All Eventualities: St. Agatha School's H1N1 Response

Like other schools across the country, St. Agatha School has been tracking and responding to the emergence of the H1N1 virus ("swine flu") since it was first reported last April. We have adopted a balance of caution and due diligence, in keeping with the public health recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MADPH), the World Health Organization (WHO), and other medical authorities. We have also consulted with local schools and health officials to develop a unified plan of action.

This policy of constant monitoring and vigilance will be intensified as the school year progresses. So far the symptoms of H1N1 are similar to the seasonal flu. Parent cooperation is KEY to ensuring the flu is contained.

Parents should NOW:

- Immunize your children for the seasonal flu, and for the H1N1 flu when it becomes available.
- Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Do not send children to school if you suspect your child is developing flu like symptoms. Any children who are judged to be sick while at school will be sent home.
- The flu is here so all parents should make arrangements now for their children's care in the event they become sick.
- Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, **without** using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Instruct them to cover up their coughs and sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of the hand when a tissue is unavailable.
- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov. We will continue to notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Thanks so much and please contact us with any questions.

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