

Diocese of Dallas

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

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August 5, 2009

Dear Parents:

We would like to take this opportunity to update you on school procedures for the approaching Influenza season and, specifically, the H1N1 Influenza strain.

Influenza epidemics evolve in unpredictable ways. The health and safety of all children, as well as the entire community, must be the number one priority for government officials and school administrators. We will make all decisions based upon the best information available to us at the time. As additional data and conditions change, we will make the necessary adjustments.

Based upon current information and the new recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, the Texas Department of Health, and the Dallas County Health Department, Catholic schools will observe the following procedures during the 2009-2010 school year:

- ✓ Catholic schools will not be closed for any suspected or confirmed cases of H1N1 Influenza unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function. Parents should still plan now for the care of their children during school hours, should it become necessary to close a school due to H1N1 Influenza.
- ✓ Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) must stay home and not attend school for at least 24 hours after fever is gone. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) During the illness the CDC recommends that students, faculty, or staff should keep away from others as much as possible, and not go into the community (except to seek medical care or for other necessities). A negative test or physician clearance is no longer required for children returning to school unless advised otherwise by the school.
- ✓ Parents should report the reason for their child's absence to the school promptly on the day of absence. Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness (fever >100°F with or without a cough or sore throat) at arrival or become ill during the school day will be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and school personnel. School personnel must be sent home and parents will be required to pick up their child immediately.
- ✓ Aspirin or aspirin-containing products should not be administered to any confirmed or suspected ill case of novel H1N1 influenza virus infection aged 18 years old and younger due to the risk of Reyes syndrome. You should discuss the appropriate use of any medications with your physician.
- ✓ We will continue to ensure sanitary measures are being observed on a regular basis in every school. This includes adequate supplies of soap in the bathrooms and frequent cleaning of "high touch" areas such as door knobs, buses, and faucets.

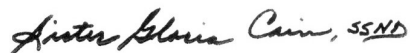
- ✓ Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.
- ✓ Parents and guardians are encouraged to get a flu shot for all family members.

We continue to encourage you and your family to follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza. This includes covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

Should the situation change during the school year, we have a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan in place that addresses communication, coordination with local health authorities, and the specific actions that we will take to ensure the safety of all Catholic school students, faculty, and staff. We will be committed to closely monitor this situation throughout the school year in order to provide you with any necessary changes and/or updates in a prompt and timely manner.

Once again we thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. We thank you for choosing to educate your children in a Catholic school. We pray that during this new school year each child will be challenged grow in order to reach his/her full potential as an individual created in God's image.

Sincerely,



Sr. Gloria Cain, S.S.N.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools