

October 12, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As you know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu at St. Peter's School. We want to keep our school not only open to students but also functioning in a normal manner during this flu season, but we need your help. Today nearly 40% of our fifth-grade students were absent due to illness. Some parents have called to report their children have been diagnosed with H1N1, including a few students from other grades. We know that not all doctor's offices are testing for H1N1. Our total absenteeism rate for today was about 10% of the entire student body.

We will work closely with the local Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our school. In the meantime, please know that we have increased our efforts to sanitize classrooms, especially in the fifth-grade areas. Here are a few things you can do to help:

1. **Teach your family to wash their hands** often with soap and water and if not possible, with an alcohol-based hand rub. We will continue to push hand-washing at school, as well!
2. **Teach your family not to share personal items**, such as food, drinks, and eating utensils. Please cover coughs and sneezes using the elbow, arm, or a tissue, rather than coughing or sneezing into hands.
3. **Know the signs of the flu:** Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, feeling very tired. Some people may have vomiting or diarrhea.
4. **Keep sick children at home** for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of a fever, without using fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen. Signs of fever include feeling warm, being flushed, or sweating and/or shivering.
5. **Please call the school office if your child is sick** to report his/her absence, and please tell us if your child has any signs and/or symptoms of the flu. We need to work closely with the Health Department regarding numbers of sick students at St. Peter's School. (We apologize to those of you who did attempt to leave messages this morning; our phone system was down temporarily—if attempts to leave messages fail, please feel free to contact us via e-mail).
6. **Do not send sick children to school.** If children are determined to be ill, they will be sent home.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your student, please contact Mrs. Elaine Kovac, our health room coordinator at 816.523.4899, ext. 214.

Sincerely,

Janet Spallo, Principal