

August 26, 2009

Dear Ascension School Family,

As we begin the 2009-2010 school year, we are conscious that flu can be easily spread from person to person. We are working closely with the Oak Park Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

For now we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in Ascension School. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. **But, we need your help to do this.**

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Covering up their coughs or 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 tired. Some people may vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Immunize your children** against seasonal flu. The Oak Park Health Department will have flu clinics for Oak Park residents. Vaccinations for H1N1 (swine) flu are also expected to be available later in the fall.
- **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. Do not use aspirin. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school ***will be sent home.*** Please notify your "emergency contacts" that they may be called if parents cannot be reached.

Ascension will reinforce hand washing and other good health practices. We intend to provide additional hand sanitizers in school, and we urge families to send children with a personal hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol). We will cooperate with the local and state health departments and provide information as it becomes available. We encourage you to learn more by visiting www.ready.illinois.gov or calling 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For information about flu in our community and what our school is doing, visit Ascension's website at www.ascension-school.com or call the Health Department at 708-358-5485. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Burns