



February 4, 2019

Dear Parents,

Cold and flu season is upon us and the New Orleans area is currently seeing a large number of students with flu symptoms and other common illnesses, including here at St. Dominic School. We care deeply about the well-being of all of our students and we are taking steps to prevent the spread of illness at school, including cleaning and disinfecting the classrooms diligently on a daily basis.

We are working closely with the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the New Orleans Health Department, and the Louisiana Department of Health to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take. We want to keep the school open and functioning with healthy children and **we need your help to do this.**

We strongly recommend that your child stay home from school if experiencing any flu or cold symptoms so we may reduce the spread of illnesses. If the flu or other flu-like illnesses continue to spread in large numbers and a substantial percentage of our students and staff are ill, we may be forced to temporarily close the school, which is a situation we would all like to avoid.

To decide whether or not to send your child to school, please consider the following guidelines.

Consider keeping your child at home for an extra day of rest and observation if he or she (or another household member) has any of the following symptoms:

- Very stuffy or runny nose and/or a cough
- Mild sore throat (no fever, no known exposure to strep)
- Headache
- Mild stomachache

Definitely keep your child at home for treatment and observation if he or she has any of these symptoms:

- Fever (greater than 100 degrees by mouth. **Your child may return to school only after his or her temperature has been consistently below 100 degrees, by mouth, for a minimum of 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications – even if they have been treated with Tamiflu or other antiviral or antibacterial medications.**
- Vomiting (even once)
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- General malaise or feelings of fatigue, discomfort, weakness, or muscle aches
- Frequent congested (wet) or croupy cough
- Lots of nasal congestion with frequent blowing of nose

The best thing you can do as parents is to not send your children to school if they are sick. Due to the severity of the flu this year, any students with a fever or other flu symptoms ***will be sent home and asked to remain home for at least 4-5 days.*** Staying home when sick will allow your child to rest and allows you to monitor their health closely. Keeping your sick child home is the responsible thing to do.


It protects fellow students and school staff – especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from the flu.

Antiviral medications such as oseltamivir phosphate, better known as Tamiflu, taken early in an illness can reduce the duration and severity of flu symptoms and may also reduce the length of time that you shed the virus. It does not, however, stop viral shedding altogether. You can still pass the virus to another person for a while after starting the drug. **In order to effectively reduce the spread of this virus, please keep your children home until they are fever free for 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications – even if they have been treated with Tamiflu or other antiviral or antibacterial medications.**

To help prevent the flu and other colds, teach your children good hygiene habits:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap is unavailable. We have hand sanitizer stations in every classroom and hallway and encourage children to use them.
- Do not touch eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Do not share personal items like drinks, food, or unwashed utensils.
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, use a paper tissue, throw it away, and then wash hands. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve, not their hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Communicate any symptoms to your doctor.
- Get a flu vaccination, if you have not already. It is not too late for vaccinations to still be effective.
- Practice other good health habits: clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work, or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for the most current information about the flu. We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu. Best wishes for staying healthy and happy in the new year!

In Christ,

Dr. Ashley Lynn Seatter
Principal