

Helpful Reminders for the 2009-2010 Cold and Flu Season

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As we approach this year's cold and flu season, there are even more issues to consider with the heightened awareness of the novel H1N1 influenza strain. While the Catholic Schools Office appreciates and understands that all parents and guardians want to be informed and be best armed with information that affects our children and families, the Catholic Schools Office also respects and maintains the privacy of our students and families as well. Please know that the Catholic Schools Office will keep in close contact with the local health departments within our diocesan boundaries, updating them of any health concerns our schools may have and following the advice and instructions that they render to us. It is important for our parish and school communities to remember that germs can be anywhere and everywhere. Collectively, all diocesan schools will step up the cleaning and disinfecting protocols in the school environment and also promote and practice good health habits during the school day. However, our principals and pastors need your help as well.

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is encouraging everyone to remember the basics for keeping our schools, students, staff and all of our parish families healthy. From the instructions that the schools across the nation have received from the Center of Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, the best preventative measures that one can practice still includes good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. This includes:

- a good 20 second hand washing often (before eating, after using the restroom, and anytime where your hands may have come in contact with germs)
- when soap and water is not available, please use hand sanitizer, remembering to rub all of the surfaces of your hands until the sanitizer gel has dried. Please refrain from putting hand sanitizer anywhere near the mouth and monitor younger children when they use the sanitizer gel on their hands
- covering you cough or sneeze with a tissue or using your sleeve to cover your cough or sneeze. When using a tissue to cover your cough/sneeze, be mindful to make sure it is disposed of promptly and properly and not left lying on the floor
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.. Germs spread that way
- also be sure to eat healthy and get plenty of rest.

Most importantly, the Catholic Schools Office is requesting that any child or staff member who has a fever of 100 degrees or higher does not return to school until he/she is fever free for 24 hours without the use of any analgesics or antipyretics (Tylenol or Motrin, etc.) Please remember that if your child is home from school for this reason, they are not able to participate in any extra-curricular activities until they are healthy enough to return to school.