

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Respiratory infections, including influenza, are common this time of year and can be caused by several types of viruses and bacteria. Symptoms of respiratory infections include a stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, fever, body aches, and headaches. Respiratory infections are spread person-to-person by breathing or touching respiratory droplets, including kissing or touching infected objects. Below are precautions that should be taken to prevent the spread of respiratory infections in schools.

Get Vaccinated

Vaccines can help to prevent several types of respiratory infections, including seasonal flu, pertussis, and some types of pneumonia. The seasonal influenza vaccine should be received every year to help stop the spread of flu. Staying up to date on all vaccines can help to keep children healthy and in school.

Use Good Hygiene

Whenever children are together, there is a chance of spreading infections. Teach children to wash hands often with soap and warm water, especially after coughing, sneezing, or wiping noses. It is also important to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then wash your hands afterward. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, as germs are spread this way.

Is Your Child Too Sick to Go to School?

Any child with respiratory symptoms (cough, runny nose, or sore throat) **and** fever should be kept home from school. Sick children should stay home until fever-free for 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick children home helps to stop the spread of infections.

See Your Doctor

If you or your child is sick, it is important to see your doctor. Because respiratory infections may be caused by viruses or bacteria, antibiotics may not treat all respiratory infections. Your doctor can help identify the cause of your illness and make sure that you receive appropriate medical care.

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