

February 12, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

It is our concern to promote quality health for the students in our school and to control and manage communicable diseases. In cooperation with the Fairfax County Health Department, we are sending this health information letter home because we are seeing an increased number of students with respiratory illness in the school.

This is the time of year when we expect to see an increase in the number of influenza and other upper respiratory infections in our community, and you can do a number of things to protect your child and others. The following recommendations help control the spread of influenza (flu) and other respiratory illnesses:

- **Encourage your child to follow standard disease control recommendations.** A student should use a tissue to cover his or her mouth when coughing or sneezing, or cough into his or her upper sleeve, not the hands, and wash his or her hands regularly.
- **Monitor your child for signs of illness.** Symptoms of flu include fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur and are much more common among children than adults.
- **Contact a doctor if your child shows symptoms of influenza.** Consult a doctor if your child develops a fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F orally, or 102°F rectally) and chills, cough, sore throat, headache, or muscle aches. Treatment for influenza may be available if sought early in the illness.
- **Vaccinate you child and yourself against influenza.** For information about influenza vaccine availability, call 703-246-2411 or see the Fairfax County Health Department web site at www.co.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd.
- **Do not send any child experiencing influenza symptoms to school.** To prevent spreading the illness to others, keep an ill child home and away from others until the child has been symptom free and without fever for at least 24 hours.

If your child has been sent home from school because of an influenza-like illness, we request that your child remain at home until 24 hours after symptoms cease. This will ensure that the spread of this contagious disease is limited as much as possible.

If you have further questions, please contact your physician or the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-481-4242.

Sincerely,

Gail Porter
School Principal