



★ Committed to Excellence ★

9981 Canterbury Street, Westchester, Illinois 60154  
 (708) 450-2700 Fax (708) 450-2718

Philip Salemi, Superintendent

Dear Parent or Guardian:

You may have read about school districts across Illinois that are experiencing very high numbers of student absences due to flu like conditions. In fact, some districts have had to close school. While we have not experienced the amount of illnesses other districts have, we continue to monitor our absences due to illness on a daily basis. If anything should change, we will let you know immediately.

We take the health of our students seriously and work very hard to keep these viruses from spreading. We regularly clean frequently-touched areas such as door knobs, stair rails, telephones, computer keyboards, and bathroom faucets and fixtures. We also are instructing all students and staff to frequently wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available. This weekend our custodial crew will be sterilizing our desks and chairs.

Here is some information we wanted to pass along to you if your child should experience flu and cold like symptoms.

Respiratory infections, such as the flu and common colds, are spread when people come in close contact with sick people and inhale airborne droplets, or come in contact with contaminated surfaces. Flu and common cold symptoms can sometimes be difficult to tell apart, but consider this:

	<b>FLU</b>	<b>COMMON COLD</b>
<b>How it begins</b>	Sudden	Gradual
<b>Cough</b>	Severe	Mild to moderate
<b>Muscles</b>	Achy	None to mild aches
<b>Stuffy, runny nose</b>	Sometimes	Common
<b>Tiredness</b>	Severe	Mild
<b>Fever</b>	None to high grade	None to low grade
<b>Complications</b>	Bronchitis/Pneumonia	Earache/Sinus infection

If symptoms persist or worsen, make an appointment with your healthcare provider to be evaluated. The flu can be serious for children of all ages, causing them to miss school, activities, or even be hospitalized.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the **Take 3** approach to fight the flu:

- 1. Get the flu vaccine every year.**
- 2. Take everyday preventative actions to stop the spread of germs.**
  - Wash hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available,
  - Cover coughs with a disposable tissue or cough into your sleeve,
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth,
  - Avoid close contact with sick individuals,
  - Avoid sharing cups and eating utensils, and
  - Stay home when sick.
- 3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your healthcare provider prescribes them.**

You can help us maintain a healthy school environment in a variety of ways:

- Make sure your children receive all recommended immunizations, including an annual flu vaccine,
- Reinforce all of the above preventive behaviors practiced at school,
- Make sure children get plenty of exercise, sleep, and healthy food, and
- **Keep sick children home, especially if they have a fever above 100° F, diarrhea, vomiting, or a severe cough.**

A couple additional important points:

- Notify your child's healthcare provider if your child develops difficulty breathing or a new onset of wheezing, and
- If your child has asthma, please make sure we have a copy of your child's Asthma Action Plan.

Important information about preventing the flu can be found at these websites:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm> and
- [www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org/school](http://www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org/school).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's school.

Sincerely,



Philip Salemi  
Superintendent