



November 3, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The health and safety of all students and staff is our first priority at Edmonton Catholic Schools. As part of this commitment, we have compiled information on preventative tips and strategies for keeping your child healthy and safe. The Health and Safety Fact Sheet will be sent to you early next week electronically or by hard copy, following your school's current distribution system for school newsletters. This information will also be available on our District website. This is the third year in a row that we are providing you with the most up-to-date information on how to prevent the flu, questions on H1N1, our District's revised Nutrition Policy, information on bullying, school bus safety tips, a list of family internet sites and how much sleep your child needs to learn effectively. The Health and Safety Fact Sheet follows the Health Fact Sheet you received from your school at the end of September with more extensive information on the seasonal flu and H1N1 influenza.

Our District's Administrative Policy and Regulation 119 on Safety highlights the commitment we have to ensure everyone's safety and can be found on our District website at www.ecsd.net or ask your school principal for a copy. This safety regulation and policy complement our District's Crisis Management Plan. This Plan gives step-by-step procedures for staff and school administration in the event of a crisis.

On the back of this letter we are also including some important information from Alberta Health Services on the influenza-like illness and H1N1 influenza that is being seen in schools and in the community. This will also give you warning signs of influenza and websites to check for additional information. We will make every effort to keep our schools open during the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic. If schools need to close, you will find information on school closures on the website of the school your child attends, our District website, and also on Shaw TV, at the bottom of the screen.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Joan Carr
Superintendent

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From Alberta Health Services

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The school your child attends may experience an increase in numbers of students/staff ill with influenza-like illness. Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as: the sudden onset of respiratory symptoms with new cough and fever (not always present) with one or more of: sore throat; muscle aches; joint pain; weakness. Gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhea may also be present. Alberta Health Services (AHS), Public Health believes this increased illness is likely due to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza because this virus is the cause of most of the ILI that is being seen in school populations currently.

As recommended by Public Health, the school is:

- Promoting and reminding students and staff of basic infection control practices such as respiratory hygiene, and frequent hand cleaning.
- Notifying parents if students become ill with ILI at school. Ill students will be kept separated from others until picked up by parents/guardians.
- Advising ill students/staff to stay home.
- Carrying out frequent environmental cleaning including high touch surfaces.
- Monitoring student and staff absentee rates due to illness.

Parents are asked to keep ill children at home until they are free of symptoms and feeling well, and are able to fully participate in all normal daily school activities; this applies to staff as well. Encourage and remind your children to use respiratory hygiene (i.e. cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough and sneeze into their sleeve, dispose of used tissues and wash hands afterwards using soap and water, use alcohol-based hand rub if there is no access to soap and water).

Healthy children/staff with mild infections do NOT need to be tested. Individuals should have medical attention as soon as possible for early treatment **ONLY IF** they have any of the following:

- Chronic heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease
- Diabetes
- Immune suppression
- Neuromuscular disorders
- Blood disorders
- Conditions requiring long term treatment with acetylsalicylic acid (ASA)
- Conditions that can compromise the management of respiratory function or increase the risk of aspiration
- Pregnancy

Immunization is the best protection against pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza.

For more information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, refer to the following websites:

<http://education.alberta.ca/>

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/>

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/>

REVISED October 28, 2009