



BLESSED TRINITY SCHOOL

"Where Academic Excellence and Spiritual Vitality have become Tradition!"

September 1, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As you may be aware, the cold and flu season is upon us. Bacteria and viruses can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are taking the proper steps to reduce the spread of flu in Blessed Trinity School. We want to keep the school open and running in a normal manner during this flu season. But, we need you to do your part.

We are working closely with the Diocese of Orlando as well as the Marion County Health Department and other state and federal agencies to monitor flu conditions in other areas and make decisions about the best steps to take regarding Blessed Trinity. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

In the meantime, you can help by:

- Teaching your children to **wash their hands often with soap and water** while counting to 20 or singing a song. ~~The use of hand sanitizer is the next best thing if soap and water is not available.~~
- Teaching your child **not to share personal items such as drinks, food or unwashed eating utensils**, as well as sharing writing utensils or putting them in their mouths. **Covering up their coughs and sneezes using the elbow, arm or sleeve instead of their hand** when a tissue is unavailable. They should never cough or sneeze out into the room.
- **Knowing the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include, fever (100 F, 37.8 Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. A fever may not be the first presenting symptom. Contact your doctor immediately if you suspect your child has the flu. If so, let the school know.
- **Keeping sick children at home for a least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing medications. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.**
- **Do not send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home. Family members of a sick child do not have to stay home, but should be closely monitored for signs of illness.
- Planning ahead by arranging for child care at home, having medications on hand to treat symptoms of flu (no aspirin due to risk of Reye's Syndrome) and isolating your sick child from family members.
- **Keeping your emergency contact list up-to-date at the school** and be sure all phone numbers and email addresses are correct.
- When the flu shot becomes available, it would be wise to get a regular flu shot as well as the H1N1 vaccine.
- Monitoring the school website for updated information and emergency plan. Follow the TV and radio reports if the flu season should become more severe.

At Blessed Trinity, our goal is to reinforce proper hand washing, coughing and sneezing techniques. We will be diligent in keeping our school as clean as possible, paying particular attention to areas of frequent hand contact such as desks, phone, hand railings in stairwells, doorknobs and keyboards.

Attendance Policy Update

Much of the literature on the impending flu season recommends that schools revise their policies and incentives to avoid unknowingly penalizing students who stay home when they are sick. In an effort to discourage sick students from coming to school Blessed Trinity School has decided to **temporarily cancel perfect attendance awards for the 2009-2010 school year**. We believe that this change is necessary to prevent the spread of the flu and other illnesses within our school. School attendance is extremely important and we encourage all students to come to school when they are healthy.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/index.html>

<http://myflusafety.com/>

http://www.mchd.com/swine_flu/swineflu_info.htm

Thank you for your efforts to keep our students healthy! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 622-5808.

Sincerely,



Jason Halstead
Principal



Barbara Driscoll, R.N.
School Nurse