
Update: 5/18/09

The H1N1 flu is still considered a Level 5 threat. At St. Francis School, we will continue to minimize germ transmission in the building and classroom. Regular cleaning of surfaces such as desks, counter tops, railings, and door knobs is being practiced. We will discourage prolonged congregation in hallways or entryways during passing times, arrival and dismissal times, limit group activities and interactions between classes, close classroom doors to hallway, and opening windows as weather permits. We continue to advise staff and students to not come to school if feeling ill, running a fever, coughing, or sneezing. All should cover mouth with elbow if coughing or sneezing and wash hands thoroughly and often.

Update: 5/6/09

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this afternoon issued significantly revised guidance for school leaders on whether to close a school to prevent the spread of the influenza A (H1N1) virus.

The new guidance states: "School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, in general, is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function. Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen."

Update: 5/1/09

Dear Parents:

I am sure that you have heard on the news reports that we have reached a level 5 pandemic for H1N1 Flue Pandemic (Swine Flu). We are beginning to receive daily messages from the Diocesan Schools Office, Polk County Health Department, and the Department of Education. On April 29th our staff was informed to take the following precautions in hopes of preventing the flu in our building:

1. Social distancing in the classroom will be followed as much as possible: that is, placing desks and chairs as far apart as the room allows.

2. Remind the students regarding proper hygiene as usual. Hand washing, hand washing, hand washing! Soap and water or alcohol-based gel products are also recommended. This includes all staff.
3. Remind students of the proper use and disposal of Kleenex.
4. At the end of each day, clean desks, chairs, phones, doorknobs, head phones, etc. with antiseptic product or diluted bleach and water.
5. Please review weekly the proper technique for containing coughs and sneezes by covering one's mouth with their arm or in the crook of their elbow.
6. New washing / coughing models are placed in all restrooms and classrooms as visual reminders for the school population.
7. Janitors and other cleaning personnel will take extra precautions in restrooms and in cleaning the water fountains.

If there are any changes we will keep you informed. If your child is sick or has a fever, please keep them home. If a student becomes ill while at school, we will ask that you pick them up immediately or have your emergency contact person come and take them home.

If you are calling school to inform us of your child's illness, please give us the nature of their illness, including specific symptoms.

To learn more about swine flu, visit or contact:

CDC Swine Flu Questions and Answers:

http://www.cdc.gov/swineflue/swineflu_you.htm

Iowa Department of Public Health: http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/swine_flu.asp

Polk County Health Department @ 286-3798 (press 6)

Thank you in advance for helping us to keep St. Francis of Assisi a healthy school.

Roberta Harvey, Principal