

September 2009

Dear Parents,

As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in Our Lady Star of the Sea. We want to keep the school open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. But, we need your help to do this.

We are working closely with the State Health Department and the Fairfield County Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

Meanwhile, here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands** often with soap and water. You can set a good example by doing this yourself.
- **Teach your children not to share personal items** like drinks, food or unwashed utensils, and to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. If they don't have a tissue, they should cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve, not their hands.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- **Extend the time sick children stay home** for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- **If a household member is sick, keep any school-aged brothers or sisters home for five days** from the time the household member became sick. Parents should monitor their health and the health of other school-aged children for fever and other symptoms of the flu.
- **Don't send children to school if they are sick.** Any children who are sick at school will be sent home. Staying home when sick will allow your children to rest and will allow you to monitor their health closely. Keeping your sick child home is

the responsible thing to do. It protects fellow students and school staff, especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from the flu.

We can all work to keep our children healthy by practicing prevention and close monitoring. If children must stay home for a prolonged time, we will prepare plans for continuing the education of students who are at home, through phone calls, homework packets, internet lessons and other approaches. With your help we will make sure that the children of Our Lady Star of the Sea keep learning.

For more information visit www.flu.gov or call 1-800-cdc-INFO for the most current information about the flu. For more information about flu in our community, visit the health department website www.ct.gov/dph. Please call the school if you have any additional questions about what our school is doing.

We will notify you of any additional changes to our school's strategy to prevent the spread of flu.

Sincerely,

Sr. Anne M. Landry, CND
Principal