



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

Department of Education

H1N1 FLU UPDATE

Catholic Schools and Religious Education Programs in the Diocese of Venice consider the safety and well-being of the students entrusted to our care a primary responsibility. As such, we are taking every possible precaution regarding the H1N1 virus as prescribed by the most current guidance of the CDC to make sure the children stay healthy. As partners with parents, we ask that they follow that same guidance, and keep children home if they have a fever or any other flu-like symptoms until they are fever-free for 24 hours without medication.

Despite parents' and schools' best efforts to keep children healthy, they sometimes get sick, so we cannot guarantee that some children will not get the flu, colds or other contagious "bugs." We can, however, assure you that we're taking proactive preventive measures.

In addition, if children do miss school or religious formation programs because they are ill, our teachers and catechists will help them catch up appropriately. Children who are ill should rest and get well, and should not be concerned about being penalized regarding school work, athletics, religious education or sacramental preparation.

Armed with the best medical advice, a calm attitude and God's help, we will get through this early flu season with the important work of education relatively uninterrupted.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Schwartz, Ed. D.
Director of Education

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Recommendations for Schools

Students with a fever or flu-like symptoms are not to come to school until they can remain fever-free without Tylenol or other medication for 24-hours. Students that have a fever at school will be sent home.

When a student is home from school sick, parents should e-mail teachers for assignments. Though rest and treatment needs to be the priority, teachers will do everything they can to work with students and help them keep pace as they recover.

Parents or siblings needing to retrieve books or materials from school lockers should check in at the Main Office. Staff will be happy to assist in this effort as needed.

Parents should contact School Nurses, each day that a student is absent. This not only allows the school to accurately document medical absences, but also provides the nurse with an update on the student's health and recovery.

If a student is seen by a physician, please obtain documentation of this visit to be kept on file in the clinic. The student or a parent can bring this to the school nurse or office once the student returns to school.

Students should not jeopardize their health or the health of other students and staff by coming to school sick or returning to school too soon. Fears of being penalized academically or losing a spot on the team are misplaced. Teachers and coaches will not punish a student for missing school or practice due to illness.

The school attendance policy allotting each student seven absences per quarter is designed to discourage avoidable circumstances such as personal days and extended vacations. However, this is a flexible policy that will accommodate any documented medical illness on a case-by-case basis, particularly this semester as we deal with flu concerns.

Whenever a student reaches four absences in a quarter, a letter is automatically sent home to parents as a courtesy. Parents and students need not be alarmed by this if they are in regular contact with school officials, or concerned about administrative failures if the absences are due to verifiable illness.

To track the recommendations for schools provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, check out the CDC website at <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/>.