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September 8, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back to school. I hope you had a happy and healthy summer break. Please let me take this opportunity to update you on some important health issues.

First, please keep in mind that the H1N1 influenza A virus is still occurring internationally. Influenza is a highly contagious viral disease of the respiratory tract. Signs and symptoms include a high fever (38.-40.C) usually with a sudden onset. Generally, it lasts about 3-4 days; however, children have been known to remain infectious for up to 21 days after symptoms have disappeared. To help prevent the transmission of the H1N1 virus, we must all practice strict hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette. Here at school we are reminding the children to wash their hands frequently and to use the hand sanitizer available in the classrooms. If you or your family is showing signs and symptoms of the virus, inform your medical practitioner and please keep your child home from school.

Secondly, please note and keep for your reference the following conditions that should warrant keeping your child home from school:

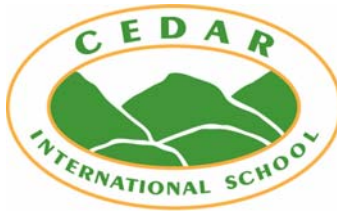
- Fever within the past twenty-four hours, including a fever that requires control with medications, such as Tylenol or Advil
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting within the previous 24 hours
- Sore throat that is severe, accompanied by fever and/or feeling ill, or after known exposure to a confirmed case of Streptococcal throat infection
- Impetigo (honey-crusted sores around the nose, mouth or body) until treated with antibiotic medicine for 24 hours
- Undiagnosed rash or spots
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye, watery or pussy) until treatment has been in effect for 24 hours
- Untreated head lice. Your child should be treated with a proven hair treatment and report to the office with the lid of the box the day of return.

A normal temperature is considered to be between the ranges of 36.5 – 37.2 Centigrade or 97.7 – 99 Fahrenheit. When a fever is present, this often marks the onset of an infectious disease. It is usually very difficult to determine exactly what that disease or illness is until hours after, when other symptoms have manifested themselves. Since so many illnesses are at their most infectious before other symptoms appear, we ask that you consider this before sending your child to school with a fever. We will contact parents when a child reports to the infirmary with an elevated temperature to ensure their well being and for the safety of others.



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And finally, we continue to have several children throughout the grades with food allergies. Of particular concern are two children in our lower grades with peanut allergies. Many of you will be aware of the seriousness of this condition but for those of you who are not, please be aware that exposure to peanuts or peanut products can cause severe and widespread effects resulting in heart and breathing difficulties. It is therefore extremely important that we ensure these children are not exposed to these foods at school. Please remember;

- No **peanuts**, or foods that list peanuts as an ingredient, are allowed at school. If children are seen to be eating these, the items will be removed for collection at the end of the school day.
- Please encourage your children to wash their hands before and after eating. We also encourage the children to use the hand sanitizer foam/gel available in all the class rooms.
- Please check with your class teacher before bringing in food for special occasions at least 24 hours beforehand. They will inform you of any food allergies.
- Please reinforce with your children the reasons why they must not share food at school.

If you would like to read more about this, please look at the www.faa.com which is an excellent food allergy website.

We kindly ask for your support and cooperation in assisting the school in providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all our children. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you further.

Kind regards,

Gail Cribbens
School Nurse / Health Advisor



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