

Dear Members of the Columbus Academy Community,

Many of you have heard news reports about H1N1 influenza and understandably are concerned about the implications of this virus related to your children's attendance at Columbus Academy. We assure you that we, too, are concerned and have been researching and discussing how best to prepare our school.

We want to share some basic information with you about H1N1 and seasonal flu, how flu is spread, how to protect against it, and how Columbus Academy is responding.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some who have contracted H1N1 flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Our school is taking precautions to prevent an outbreak among our students. We are stridently encouraging hand-washing and asking our teachers to be particularly vigilant for children who are complaining of illness during the school day. We have hand sanitizer and tissues available throughout the school as well as strict protocols for daily cleaning and disinfecting by our custodial staff.

The most important partners in this endeavor, however, are you. We need your help to prevent the spread of illness in our schools for not only influenza but any kind of virus. There are some simple everyday actions that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends to keep your children and yourselves healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth unnecessarily to prevent spreading germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- *If your child is sick, please keep him/her home from school and limit contact with others to avoid spreading infection. A student with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher should stay home until fever-free for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications.*

If you would like more information about H1N1 and seasonal flu, call the CDC hotline at 1-800-232-4636.

Additional information is available on the following web sites:

www.cdc.gov/flu/school/
www.pandemicflu.gov
www.odh.ohio.gov/

Respectfully,
Beckie Hoagland, School Nurse