

St. Francis of Assisi School
1067 Anna Maria Ave.
Innisfil, Ontario L9S 1W2
(705) 431-5711

November 9, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian

We know that parents and guardians are understandably worried about the spread of illness in our school community. This update will address some of the concerns you may have.

Protecting the health of students and minimizing the spread of illness is a priority. That is why we continue to work directly with our local Health Units and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. We have taken a number of steps to help control the spread of flu-like illness in our school. Our Board website www.smcdsb.on.ca has a complete list of the measures we are taking. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit developed an excellent Question and Answer resource for families with school-age children – we have attached that resource for you.

We continue to receive specific questions about the number of cases or suspected cases of H1N1 in our school or in specific classrooms. The reality is that there are very likely cases of H1N1 throughout the community.

There are important reasons why we cannot share information about student absences with you. Medical professionals are not routinely testing individuals who have symptoms of the illness, nor are we provided with that information. In addition, we have an obligation to protect the privacy of our staff and students and will not reveal personal health information. Our Board is reporting student absences to the Health Unit and the Ministry of Education so that health care professionals can continue to monitor the situation.

The Current Situation

The Health Unit provides us with regular updates. As of October 30th, they have told us that Simcoe Muskoka is currently experiencing sporadic, but increasing, flu activity. They are also telling us that, in Ontario, the majority of H1N1 cases continue to be reported as mild.

The health experts reiterate that avoiding places like schools, will not reduce the risk of exposure to H1N1. That is why the Health Unit is recommending that healthy children continue to come to school and that our schools remain open. However, if your child is sick, it is very important that you please keep them home.

At our school, we will continue the proactive and preventative measures currently in place to minimize the impact of H1N1.

If you have questions related to H1N1 or any flu-like illness, speak to a medical professional. They are equipped with the information, knowledge, advice and answers you may need as a family. If you have specific questions about your child at school, please contact me at **431-5711**.

Sincerely

A. Bolcso
Principal