

Dear Parent:

Flu and cold season is here. Please take a few moments to read the following information regarding cold and flu symptoms and the prevention of these contagious illnesses.

In general, common cold symptoms are milder than flu symptoms. The following chart compares the symptoms.

#### IS IT A COLD OR THE FLU?

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Flu</b>
Fever	Occasionally	Usually high (102-104) with sudden onset, lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Occasionally	Prominent
General aches and pains	Slight	Usual: often quite severe
Fatigue and weakness	Mild	Extreme: can last 2-3 weeks
Prostration	Never	Early and prominent
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate: Hacking cough	Common: can become severe

*Source: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases*

Management of cold and flu symptoms includes high fluid intake and rest. Children should be excluded from school if they have a fever (100 and over). Students may return to school after being fever free for 24 hours and feeling well enough to engage in learning. Students should stay home from school if they are actively sneezing, or have a persistent runny nose and/or cough. Please contact your child's health care provider if you have a concern about persistent fever and/or respiratory problems associated with the flu.

Cold and flu germs are passed by airborne respiratory droplets and by hand contact. Please encourage frequent hand washing, especially after toileting, blowing or coughing, and before eating. Adequate hand washing should take about 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing Happy Birthday twice, or the alphabet song once). We are encouraging students to wash their hands more often at school also, and every classroom has tissues within easy reach. **Remind your children to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their upper sleeve, not into their hands, to prevent the airborne spread of germs.**