



Our Lady Star of the Sea School
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OLSS NURSE NEWS

Flu Season IS Here!

Dear families,

The Flu season is officially upon us! OLSS has seen their first case of flu in the last week. Please remind your students to wash their hands, cover their mouths, and remain home if experiencing flu-like symptoms. Students who experience a fever with cold/flu-like symptoms should remain home and follow up with their healthcare provider for flu/COVID testing. Our upcoming flu clinic at school is October 11th. If you are interested in vaccinating your student against the flu, I would recommend signing up for the flu clinic at the link below for students grades Pre-k-5th grade, or getting in contact with your students provider asap, as the season is starting early this year!

OLSS FLU CLINIC SIGN UP:

<https://www.marylandvax.org/appointment/en/reg/0249621019>

Illness Reminder

This is a friendly reminder that symptom screening should be occurring DAILY, in the morning prior to leaving for school. We are seeing an influx of students arriving to school with various symptoms and no documentation of testing. Parents should check their students temperature, and then assess students for symptoms that stray from their baseline.

While currently our COVID numbers have looked excellent thus far, we are seeing an uptick in various other illnesses. As our children have had limited exposure over the past two years to various viruses and illnesses, we are seeing both children and adults be more susceptible to

illness and to secondary infections and complications from common illnesses, thus causing more time out of school due to longer recovery.

Please review the common illnesses/conditions our community is seeing at this time, and be sure to take note of symptoms. While COVID testing can be completed at school, we cannot test for other illnesses like flu, Strep, and RSV. If your student experiences the symptoms below or develops a fever that does not resolve, please reach out to your student's pediatrician/healthcare provider for further assessment.

COMMON COLD VIRUSES (Rhinoviruses/Adenovirus): cough, sneezing, congestion/runny nose, sore throat (typically No fever)

ACTION NEEDED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL: Once students are COVID tested per protocol (2 tests total- 1 at home, 1 at school or by healthcare provider with documentation provided) students can return to school.

SEASONAL ALLERGIES: Sneezing, itchy watery eyes, runny/congested nose (mucus is typically clear/thin), itchy/scratchy throat, post nasal drip that can cause a cough

ACTION NEEDED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL: IF your student has documented allergies from a provider and symptoms are baseline/typical for student, no action is needed other than to continued prescribed medications and allergy plan from your student's provider. IF your student does not have documented allergies and has 2 or more symptoms that coincide with the COVID list, testing must be completed prior to return.

COVID: ANY ONE of the following: New onset cough, Shortness of breath, fever over 100, or loss of taste or smell. **ANY TWO of the following:** Headache, runny nose/congestion, body aches, chills, diarrhea/nausea/vomiting, sore throat

ACTION NEEDED: COVID testing- 2 tests completed at least 24 hours apart, one test completed at school/healthcare provider with documentation of negative test provided prior to return to school.

RSV: Congested/Runny Nose, headache, cough, fever, sore throat, more severe symptoms can include: difficulty breathing, wheezing, and high fever and should be evaluated by a provider immediately.

ACTION NEEDED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL: COVID testing as symptoms overlap, if negative, and symptoms persist, or are severe, follow up with provider for further testing and evaluation ASAP.

Strep Throat: fever, sore throat (sometimes with white patches in back of throat), headache, chills, loss of appetite, swollen lymph nodes, pain when swallowing, nausea and vomiting is sometimes seen in children

ACTION NEEDED: If your student is experiencing any of the above symptoms, they will need to be seen by their provider to test for strep and potentially be started on antibiotics. Strep throat is bacterial and will need to be treated to resolve and prevent potential further complications. Students may return once fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and once they have been on antibiotics for 24hrs.

Flu (Influenza): Fever, headache, chills, fatigue, runny nose, sneezing, cough, body aches, sore throat

ACTION NEEDED: If your student is experiencing a combination of any of the above symptoms, please make an appointment with their provider to test for both COVID and flu. While students may access the school for COVID testing, I am unable to complete Flu testing at school.

Stomach Flu/bug (Rotavirus, Noravirus): Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, sometimes fever

ACTION NEEDED: Students must be vomiting/diarrhea free for 24 hours and able to tolerate oral diet prior to return. IF symptoms are accompanied by fever or other symptoms, COVID testing must be completed prior to return.

As you can see, many of these illnesses have overlapping symptoms, without testing we are unable to determine exact cause of illness. IF your student presents in the morning with symptoms that are atypical/new for them, PLEASE remain home, monitor for the day, reach out if in doubt, and I can assist in further assessment and determine if testing is needed or not, or if we just need to monitor for the day to see if further symptoms develop. **If your student is running a fever (Temperature reading 100 or above) DO NOT medicate your students and send them to school.** At no time, is this acceptable practice and causes infections to spread more rapidly among students, meaning more class time lost for more children. Any student running a fever MUST be COVID tested prior to return to school and may need further evaluation from a healthcare provider.

PROPER COVID TESTING

Proper COVID testing is 1 PCR test or 2 rapid tests 24 hours apart. **Please note that home testing kits are only acceptable for ONE of the TWO tests needed.** One of the COVID tests must be documented here at school or by results from a healthcare provider. Testing at school is quick and convenient with our drive-through testing and can be completed in the mornings (starting at 8:15am) so students who test negative can return to class without missing class

time. Please contact schoolnurse@olss.org for more information on OLSS drive-through COVID testing. The ONLY time a single home test will be accepted is in the case of a rapid POSITIVE test. In this situation, if a student tests positive via rapid testing, we will accept these results to ensure prompt isolation. The parent will isolate the student at home and may follow up with PCR test if they feel the test may not be accurate. Currently all students have access to rapid testing only at OLSS with parent consent.

INFECTION PREVENTION

Our best practices against the spread of infection are proper hand washing, remaining home when ill, and vaccination against communicable diseases. Please remind students to wash hands frequently, especially before meals, after coughing/sneezing, and when transitioning to a new activity.

Please review the link below for further guidance on keeping our students healthy this school year as we begin to return to “normal activities.”

<https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/covid-rsv-virus-guide-for-parents>

Sincerely,

Brandi Hutchins, OLSS School Nurse