



Our Lady Star of the Sea School
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Pastor: Father Robert Kilner
Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Thompson

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Dear Our Lady Star of the Sea School Parents and Guardians,

The CDC released updated recommendations on March 1 for how people can protect themselves and their communities from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. The new guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, such as COVID-19, flu, and RSV, which can cause significant health impacts and strain on hospitals, health care workers, and our schools. OLSS has witnessed this impact with school closures in 2022 and 2023 winter seasons due to large outbreaks of Flu.

CDC made updates to the recommendations now because the U.S. is seeing far fewer hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19 and because we have more tools than ever to combat flu, COVID, and RSV (vaccines, anti-virals, etc.) When people get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated guidance recommends that they stay home and away from others. CDC also recommends completing testing so proper treatment options can be available to lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness.

Once people resume normal activities, the expectation is for people to take additional prevention strategies for the next 5 days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing hygiene practices, wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping a distance from others, and/or getting tested for respiratory viruses.

Enhanced precautions are especially important to protect those most at risk for severe illness, including those over 65 and people with weakened immune systems. The updated guidance also includes specific sections with additional considerations for people who are at higher risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses, more detailed information can be found on the CDC website at Respiratory Virus Guidance ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))

Please review our updated OLSS Respiratory Illness Protocol on the following page for specific guidelines on how OLSS will handle respiratory illnesses moving forward.

Thank you,

Mrs. Brandi Hutchins
School Nurse
schoolnurse@olsss.org

OLSS RESPIRATORY ILLNESS PROTOCOL

(Includes, but not limited to: COVID-19, Flu, RSV)

The updated guidance from the CDC is to "stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause." You can resume normal activities once symptoms are improving (**symptoms improving means: a significant reduction in symptoms, have a normal appetite, coughing and congestion/runny nose is minimal and well controlled.**) and you've been fever-free (without the aid of fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours.

Respiratory Illness Symptoms list:

- Cough
- Fever OR Chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell •Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Students and staff who experience a **NEW ONSET** of any of the above symptoms that can not be explained by another diagnosis (for example: seasonal allergies, asthma, etc) **MUST** :

- Remain home for **24 hours after symptom onset**
- Complete COVID testing 24-48 hours after symptom onset- **If negative and symptoms improved** (see definition of symptom improved above in red)- Student/staff may return to school.
- **IF symptoms persist**, and COVID testing is negative- Remain home and contact provider for further testing for Flu, RSV, Strep, etc.
- IF **ANY** testing is positive (Flu, COVID, RSV, etc)-Student/Staff **MUST** report the case to schoolnurse@olsss.org and remain home until fever free for 24 hours without the use of medications **AND symptoms resolving/improved** (see definition of improved in red above).
 - **IF positive and no fever develops:** students and staff **MUST** remain home for **AT LEAST 24 hours**, have a **significant reduction** in symptoms, have a normal appetite, **coughing and congestion/runny nose is minimal and well controlled.**
 - **For the five days after returning to school students/staff must** wear a well-fitting mask and maintain distance from others. **If your student is unable to properly mask wear, they must remain home for 5 days or until symptoms are completely resolved, whichever comes first.**
 - IF symptoms or fever return, you should start back at step one: staying home and away from others until symptoms improving and fever-free for at least 24 hours.

STUDENTS AND STAFF WHO ARE ABSENT FOR 3 OR MORE DAYS RELATED TO ILLNESS ARE REQUIRED BY ADW TO HAVE A DOCTORS NOTE TO RETURN.

*** OLSS Staff will have the right to provide a mask to any student with questionable symptoms***