

FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

Dear Parents & Guardians

During the past several days our school has experienced a high number of absences due to respiratory illness (including Influenza A.) Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine CDC recommend schools and families focus on early identification and exclusion of ill students and staff. Anyone with symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough, fever, or sore throat, should stay home and follow the [CDC recommendations](#) as outlined below. If individuals test positive for COVID-19, they should isolate for 5 days and may return with symptom improvement, masking days 6 through 10.

If your child has an uncontrolled cough, difficulty breathing, or persistent fever, you should consider a medical evaluation. There are many respiratory illnesses that cause these symptoms (e.g., COVID-19, Pertussis, Influenza, RSV).

Most illnesses of this nature are spread from person to person. Germs can be easily spread by:

- Coughing, sneezing, or talking
- Touching your face with unwashed hands after touching contaminated surfaces or objects
- Touching surfaces or objects that may be frequently touched by other people

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent yourself and your loved ones from getting sick, especially at [key times](#) when you are likely to get and spread germs.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not readily available, [use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands

Covering coughs and sneezes, keeping hands clean, and staying home when sick can help prevent the spread of serious illness. If you are ill, you should try to distance yourself from others, so you do not spread your germs. Distancing includes staying home from work or school when possible.

- COVID-19 -- individuals should consider home testing, isolate for at least 5 days with a positive test, and may return with masking depending on severity of illness [When to Leave Isolation](#)
- Influenza – individuals should stay home until 24 hours after fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications. [Fact Sheet](#)
- Pertussis – individuals should stay home until they have completed 5 days of antibiotics. [Fact Sheet](#)
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV) -- individuals with RSV are usually contagious 3 to 8 days. Most RSV infections go away on their own in a week or two. [Fact Sheet](#)
- Colds – there is no standardized recommendation for returning during/after a cold. Individuals with colds are typically infectious for 4-7 days after symptoms begin.

If your child has become ill with respiratory illness and you have not already alerted the school, please contact the school at 371-2160 and provide as much information as possible regarding the illness. Thank you for your continued assistance in keeping our schools and communities healthy.