

Guidance to Help Prevent the Spread of Illness During Flu Season

School Type: **All schools**

Workflow Subcategory: **Health**

The fall and winter seasons coincide with an increase in viruses that can cause fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and breathing problems. These viruses include noroviruses (commonly known as the stomach flu), influenza (commonly known as the flu), and the common cold and enteroviruses (mild to severe respiratory illness). Please note the following guidance to help prevent the spread of the flu virus at schools:

- Students and staff should wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. In general, students and staff should wash their hands after arriving at school, before touching food, after using the bathroom, and after coughing or sneezing. Please ensure that soap and paper towels are available and note that alcohol-based sanitizers are not as effective against spreading viruses as soap and water.
- Students and staff should cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or use their shirt sleeve, not their hands.
- Students and staff members who are sick, especially with fever, vomiting or diarrhea, should stay home to reduce the risk of spreading the illness to others. Children with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea should stay home until their symptoms are gone and they are free of fever without taking fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours.
- Students and staff members should get vaccinated against the flu.
 - In addition to administering flu vaccines to adults, licensed pharmacists can now use an appropriate non-patient-specific standing order to administer flu vaccines to children between the ages of 2 and 17 years of age, on a temporary basis.
 - If your school has a School-Based Health Center (SBHC) on site, all vaccinations can be provided free of charge by the SBHC to students who have been enrolled at the center. In cases where SBHCs are not on site, students will need to visit a local clinic or physician to receive immunization; they can also locate [federally qualified health centers](#). FSC health directors can also provide you with a list of clinics near your school.

Please backpack home this [letter](#) to parents on the flu vaccination and prevention. For additional information, see these resources on [Noroviruses](#) and [Influenza/Flu](#) that may be of assistance in answering questions from students and parents. You may also find it helpful to print and post the following materials to promote these healthy practices in your school: ["Cover Your Cough" posters](#) are available in 14 languages, and another poster that [promotes hand-washing](#).

For questions, contact your school nurse or FSC [health director](#).