



Catholic Schools Office

Diocese of Baton Rouge
1800 South Acadian Thruway, P.O. Box 2028
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
(225) 336-8735
FAX (225) 336-8711

May 4, 2009

Dear Parents:

In light of the current health concerns about the H1N1 (swine) flu in our country, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about what we are currently doing within the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the steps you should take to have a plan for your family in the event of a swine flu outbreak.

The safety and health of the students is our utmost concern at all times. We are closely monitoring the situation within our Catholic schools and are gathering information of any case of student or staff reporting flu-like symptoms. We continue to be in contact with health officials for guidance in order to coordinate our response should a probable or confirmed case occur within one of our schools.

Any student that is sent home with flu-like symptoms or is absent with flu-like symptoms is now required to have a physician's clearance in order to return to school. This measure has been put into place to ensure that any case of the flu is properly evaluated by a medical professional to determine whether the potential for swine flu exists. It is important for you to keep your child at home if he/she develops any flu like symptoms or if you or anyone living in your home develops any flu-like symptoms until an evaluation by a physician has been made.

We have received many questions from parents and staff about the varying description of cases reported in the media. Health authorities designate confirmed Influenza cases that could be swine flu into three categories:

Suspected Cases – A person has been administered a flu test by a physician and the results confirm Influenza A. When this happens, physicians send the results to parish health authorities for further testing. At this level, the person could have the common flu or potentially have swine flue, and further tests are needed.

Probable Cases – Parish health authorities have tested a person's Influenza A positive results for a flu subtype and the results are unable to be determined. When this happens parish health authorities are unable to rule out swine flu, and the test results are sent to the National Center for Disease Control for further tests. This elevates the case to "probable" for swine flu.

Confirmed Cases – The National Center for Disease Control has tested the results and confirmed the case is a swine flu case.

If a diagnosis of any of our students elevates to “Probable Case”, we may dismiss all classes at that school and close the facility for cleaning and disinfection. The parents in that specific school will be notified immediately. There will also be guidance provided to you regarding any additional steps that must be taken with your child and your family physician.

It is important that you and your family plan for any potential closure of the school that your child attends should there be any confirmed cases in the school in the future.

If any Catholic school closes for a probable or confirmed case, we will cancel all after-school events and activities at that particular school as well as all athletic events. Please be aware that bus service may also be affected, because there may be some buses that transport students from several different schools. If this is the case, you will be notified.

We encourage you to continue to practice general health precautions including frequent hand washing, covering the nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing, etc.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and cooperation during this difficult time. We will continue to provide updates to you, through your school, as additional information becomes available or circumstances change.

Let us continue to pray for any persons afflicted by this illness and ask Our Lady to intercede to her Son for us to be protected from any escalation of the H1N1 flu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. M. Michaeline, O.P.".

Sr. Mary Michaeline, O.P.
Superintendent of Schools