

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 1
Castle Hill - Chapman - Mapleton - Presque Isle - Westfield

Health Office

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is the time of year in which colds and the flu, as well as other illnesses, are easily spread from person to person. In an effort to keep everyone healthy, I would like to remind you of the simple steps you can take to decrease the spread of germs.

Good hand-washing is an easy and effective way to decrease the spread of illnesses among students, family and friends. Here are a few things to remember:

- It is important to wash your hands frequently throughout the day, using warm soapy water.
- Be sure to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Singing the “Happy Birthday” song two times is a good way to be sure you are scrubbing your hands long enough.
- After rinsing off the soapy water, dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel. Use the paper towel to shut the water off, especially in public places.

Another helpful way to decrease the spread of germs is by covering your cough. Coughing or sneezing into your upper sleeve instead of your hands will help decrease the spread of germs. You could also use a tissue to cover your cough or sneeze, throw the tissue away and then wash your hands

Stomach viruses are frequent illnesses during the school year. The above is helpful in preventing the spread of these germs. Oftentimes the virus remains in your system and may be passed on for up to 3 days after one is feeling better. For this reason, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children who are ill remain at home during the symptomatic period and for 24-48 hours after the last set of symptoms are experienced.

Influenza-like illnesses also circulate during this time. If your child is complaining of a cough and/or a sore throat and has an elevated temperature, please keep your child home from school. Your child may return to school once they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing medication such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Ibuprofen.

The technical definition of a fever is a temperature above 100.5°F. There are times when it is appropriate for a child to go home even if an elevated temperature is not present but they are experiencing other symptoms.

Please be aware that, with the illnesses described above, your child may need a day or two at home to recover even after their fever or other symptoms are no longer present.

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Conjunctivitis, also known as ‘pink-eye’, is an inflammation or infection of the mucous membrane lining of the eye. This requires a visit to the doctor’s office to determine if an antibiotic is needed for treatment. Your child will be sent home from school if pink-eye is suspected.

Lastly, it is not uncommon for there to be a few cases of head lice throughout the school year. The school nurses are very discreet and maintain personal privacy when dealing with this issue. Head lice do not carry diseases. Anyone can get head lice. Head lice can be treated, has nothing to do with cleanliness, and does not reflect poorly on you as a parent/guardian. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or shared objects (combs, towels, etc.). Head lice cannot survive without a human host and they do not fly or jump. Please be careful when looking at the internet for solutions to head lice issues and use reliable sources. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov, is a reliable site for such information.

As always, please let your child’s school know if he/she will be absent due to illness. There are some students in our District for whom an illness such as the flu, a bad cold, sore throat or the chickenpox can be very serious. Notifying your child’s school about these illnesses is especially important and helpful.

I appreciate your efforts to help us keep all MSAD #1 students healthy. Please feel free to call the Health Services Office at 764-8105 should you have any questions the school nurses may help you with.

Stay Healthy,

Deb Raymond, RN BSN

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Health Services Director