



Department of Nursing Services

November 1st, 2024

Dear Families,

This season, we are seeing an increase in cases of walking pneumonia (community acquired pneumonia - CAP). This communication will provide you with important information on CAP as well as other common respiratory viruses including Influenza (Flu), Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), and COVID-19 to help you make the best health decisions for your family.

Walking Pneumonia (CAP) is a respiratory infection that causes the air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs to fill with fluid. CAP is typically caused by a bacterium called *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. Infections are generally mild. Symptoms include a productive cough, fever, trouble breathing and fatigue. In general, bacterial pneumonia is less contagious than the viruses that cause respiratory illness including Flu, RSV and COVID-19. If your child experiences CAP symptoms, it is advised that you consult your pediatrician for an evaluation. Treatment often includes antibiotics and rest. For more information on CAP, visit the [CDC website](#)

The Flu virus usually presents with the following symptoms; a sudden fever, chills, headache, fatigue, sore throat, dry cough and/or a nasal congestion. While symptoms are similar to a common cold, children with the flu usually have a higher fever and more severe symptoms. If your child experiences flu symptoms, it is advised that you consult their pediatrician. Testing is recommended as antiviral therapies are effective and readily available.

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms such as fever, congestion, cough and sneezing. Symptoms may be more severe in young children and the elderly. With RSV, children can become sick very quickly. If you notice a rapid increase in the severity of symptoms and/or changes in breathing, call your child's pediatrician immediately or go directly to the emergency room. Routine testing is often not recommended, as symptoms are generally mild and effective antiviral therapy is not readily available in the community setting.

Covid-19 symptoms include sudden loss of taste or smell, cough, headache, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, and sore throat. Routine home testing is important so infected individuals can have access to effective antiviral therapy, and isolate from persons at high risk of complications

In order to promote the health and safety of our school community, we continue to recommend consulting your health care providers regarding the Flu vaccine and COVID-19 boosters, and keeping your child home if they are sick, returning when they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and feel well enough to return. Follow this [LINK](#) to learn more about respiratory illness including signs/symptoms, treatment options and case rates in Connecticut. Always seek the advice of your health care provider when you are concerned about your child's health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Merritt".

Emily Merritt, FNP, MSN, RN
Director of Nursing Services
Darien Public Schools
203.655.3981 x2304