

Dear parents/guardians -

As we move through fall and into winter, it is important to note that many respiratory illnesses are on the rise both in our schools and in the general population.

Illness	Signs/Symptoms
Common colds	Runny, stuffy nose; sore throat; cough; fatigue. Low fever or no fever.
Influenza (Flu)	Body aches; fever; chills; cough; congestion; fatigue.
COVID-19	Ranges from mild to severe and may include nasal congestion; sneezing; headache; sore throat; cough; fever, breathing difficulties; loss of taste or smell; and fatigue.
RSV	Cold-like symptoms; wheezing; fever; cough. Mostly seen in children, but can also affect adults.
Pneumonia	Cough; fever; difficulty breathing; chest pain; low energy; fatigue; loss of appetite. May need a chest x-ray to diagnose and may require antibiotics to treat.
Strep Throat	Throat pain that usually comes on quickly; painful swallowing; red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus; tiny red spots on the area at the back of the roof of the mouth; swollen, tender lymph nodes in the neck; fever; headache; rash; nausea or vomiting, especially in younger children. Requires antibiotic treatment.
Pertussis	Progresses in phases, starting with cold-like symptoms like runny nose, sneezing, and cough that last for one to two weeks and slowly worsen. Followed by strong, uncontrolled coughing spells that may or may not be accompanied by a “whooping” sound during inhalation. In between coughing spells, a person will typically appear well. Pertussis symptoms can last up to 6-10 weeks in total. Requires antibiotic treatment. Close contacts may need antibiotics as well.

Steps you can take to help prevent illness:

- **Handwashing** - the #1 way to prevent illness!
- **Eat a well-balanced diet**
- **Adequate sleep** - ensure your children are getting enough sleep and practice good sleep hygiene (end screen use at least 1 hour before bedtime, limit caffeine intake, etc.)
- **Vaccination** - Get a seasonal flu and/or COVID-19 vaccination early in the fall season. All school-aged children should be up to date on their pertussis vaccine with their Dtap or Tdap vaccinations.

If your child needs to stay home from school due to illness, please let the school nurse know. Please keep your child home if they have a fever over 100.4 degrees (they must stay home until 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medication). Contact your child's pediatrician, or seek care at an Urgent Care Center or ER with any immediate concerns or breathing difficulties.