



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

February 7, 2025

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Fairfax County is seeing very high levels of influenza (flu) illness. Visits to emergency departments and urgent care centers for flu-like illness have increased, especially among children, and multiple flu outbreaks have occurred in our community and school settings.

As you know, people who are sick with the flu exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, or feeling tired. The virus that causes the flu spreads through droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. To help prevent or reduce the spread of illness, **it is important for individuals who are sick to stay home and away from others** until symptoms improve and until they have been free of fever for at least 24 hours.

Prescription antiviral medications can help reduce the severity of flu and shorten the duration of illness. Check with your healthcare provider promptly about starting treatment if your student has flu symptoms, especially if they are at higher risk of serious health complications.

It is also not too late to get vaccinated. While the health department encourages individuals 6 months and older to get vaccinated against the flu in the fall, getting vaccinated now can still afford protection during this very active flu season.

Please also consider the following healthy habits that reduce the spread of flu (and other germs):

- **Cover coughs and sneezes.** If you must be around others while ill, wearing a mask can help reduce spread.
- **Wash hands often** with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available (with supervision for younger children).
- **Clean frequently touched surfaces.**
- **Do not give aspirin to children.** Anyone 18 years and younger who might have the flu should not be given aspirin or any products that contain salicylate (e.g. Pepto Bismol) as this can cause a rare and serious complication called Reye's syndrome.

Feel free to also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for other steps to take to [prevent flu from spreading](#). If you have any questions, please contact your healthcare provider or school public health nurse.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Gloria Addo-Ayensu

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