

Dear Parents,

We've reached the cold/flu time of year again. We have observed many of our children have been sick. Cold, cough, flu, and vomiting. We have sent children home who were throwing up or too sick to maintain their regular activities. We are trying to provide a sickness-free environment and we need your help!

Our policies are based on our commitment to help families stay well, both so that children can attend and derive the most benefit from their Montessori placement and so that the parents can be at their own schedules consistently. However, it is also important for the sake of our entire program, so that we can more accurately protect the other children, as well as our staff, whose good health is directly related to their ability to maintain their consistent contributions.

Illness:

1. Children may only return to school if they have NOT had a fever WITHIN THE 24 HOURS PREVIOUS TO A SCHOOL MORNING. This means that even if a fever breaks, a child may not attend until 24 hours have elapsed since the fever breaks. This is standard medical policy and parents may verify this with their medical advisor. Since energy levels or fevers alone are not accurate indicators of illness, our staff will advise a child's parents that a child is not well even when given other factors in the absence of a fever, such as appearance, energy level, vomiting, etc. A fever simply means that the child's body is fighting off a microbe invasion.

If, in the judgment of a staff member, a child is deemed ill, parents must pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time. This is important, both to safeguard the ill child, but also, to safeguard the staff and other children in attendance. Therefore, we cannot maintain a sick child for anytime more than the time needed for the parents to arrive. Sick children will wait for parents away from other children and teaching staff. In the event that an adult cannot be reached in a reasonable time, and in the event that a child becomes what appears to be very seriously ill, staff will call 911. **Please DO NOT SEND CHILDREN TO SCHOOL WITH A NEW ILLNESS OR COUGH since this is the time when the diseases are most contagious.** Please be advised that children are still contagious even after the onset of an illness, though exact parameters will vary. This means that children SHOULD NOT be sent to school for staff to observe their health condition, as that is the parent's responsibility. While some children show long-term signs of upper respiratory problems, and these can often be associated with allergies, and if such long-term symptoms are observed, parents will be asked to provide a medical explanation from an authorized health advisor that a child is free from contagious disease BEFORE a child will be able to continue to attend school. Do not send children to school who are being treated with AUGMENTIN, as this drug creates explosive diarrhea symptoms, which cannot be managed readily in a school setting.

- **If your child has vomited and/or had diarrhea do not send your child to school until it has ceased for a period of 24 hours.**
- **Do not send children to school who display a greenish discharge, as this is an indication of an active infection in the child's head-neck system. Consult a medical advisor and return the child to school when the discharge is clear for 24 hours consistently.**

Hand washing: 1. Hand washing is one of the surest ways to avoid illnesses, even when children engage in group activity away from the family. We know it sounds silly or even as if we are over-doing it, to have to write this direction to parents, but we have the backing of a major research study which indicates adults report washing their hands 60% more often than they actually do. Please teach your child to wash hands when coming home from an activity, when coming in from yard-play, when finishing using the toilet (some tell us they didn't touch anything and so therefore do not have to wash, but we tell them it's important to ALWAYS wash hands when leaving ANY bathroom), AND before they eat snacks.

You can carry wet-wipes away from home easily to do this sort of hand-washing. WE ARE NOW ASKING CHILDREN TO WASH THEIR HANDS WHEN THEY ARRIVE AT SCHOOL, AND WHEN THEY REENTER THE CLASSROOM FROM THE YARD. PLEASE HELP US BY DOING SIMILARLY AT HOME, TO KEEP OUTSIDE GERMS AT BAY.

We are constantly sanitizing the classrooms, materials and the door knobs. If anyone is interested in donating items to our classrooms we need:

- Clorox wipes
- Lysol disinfecting spray
- Baby wipes
- Old bath towels (to wipe the materials)
- Kitchen towels

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sithy Mashoor,

Administrator