

August 31, 2009

Dear St. Andrew's Families,

Thank you once again for your cooperation and spirit as we commence the 2009-2010 school year. It has been a fantastic beginning to the year.

I am writing you today to provide an update on several important health and safety issues facing our school community.

H1N1 Flu Virus

As we all know, the H1N1 Flu Virus, which was first detected in the U.S. in April of this year, is expected to spread this fall and winter as millions of children report to school. On June 11, the World Health Organization declared that a global pandemic of the H1N1 virus was underway by raising the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), this action was a reflection of the spread of the new H1N1 virus, not the severity of illness caused by the virus. In the state of Louisiana, there have been 504 confirmed cases of the H1N1 virus as of August 24.

Here at St. Andrew's, we are monitoring the spread of H1N1 closely and are following guidance set forth by the CDC, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Association of Independent Schools. St. Andrew's Church member and Tulane University Medical School Chair of Microbiology and Immunology Dr. John Clements has also offered me a detailed briefing on the H1N1 virus. Based on research from each of these groups, at this point I can offer the following recommendations that parents, students, faculty, and staff should follow:

* Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

* Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw away the tissue after you use it.

* Avoid close contact with sick people. If you or your child is sick, please stay at home and do not return to School or work until symptom-free (without fever and without medication to reduce fever) for at least 24 hours.

* When it becomes available later this fall, take the seasonal flu vaccine. We will be providing the seasonal flu vaccine for our faculty and staff, and we are considering serving as a site for students to receive the vaccine, as well. The CDC expects an H1N1 vaccine to become available later this fall.

We will close School only as a measure of last resort. The CDC is not recommending school closures at this point, as the health and educational costs of widespread closures are thought to outweigh the positives of quarantining children and their families at home.

To facilitate improved personal hygiene and to help prevent the spread of disease, we have placed hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes throughout the School, including in the classrooms and in the lunchroom, and we will be instructing the children in good hand-washing habits.

I commend to you the following resources, which provide excellent background and guidance on the H1N1 flu virus:

- * CDC: <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- * LA Department of Health and Hospitals: <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/>
- * US Department of Education: www.ed.gov/h1n1flu
- * National Association of Independent Schools: <http://nais.org/>

One Call Now Emergency Communication

St. Andrew's subscribes to the One Call Now (www.onecallnow.com) emergency communication system. As a subscriber, St. Andrew's can quickly and easily send a recorded phone message to every telephone number in our database.

In the event of an emergency or a time-sensitive communication, you will receive a phone call containing pertinent information on any home, work, or cellular number listed in our database. To that end, please remain vigilant about updating the School with your family's contact information. To make a change in your contact information, please e-mail Renée Nason at office@standrewsepischool.org

In the next week, the School will be conducting a test of its One Call Now communication system, so be prepared for a test recording from me.

Drop-Off and Dismissal

Overall, I have been pleased with the quality of our drop-off and dismissal procedures. However, I believe there is room for improvement. To that end, please note the following:

* During pick-up and drop-off times (approximately 7:30 a.m.-8:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m.-3:45 p.m.), do not park on the School side of either Zimpel or Short Street.

* During pick-up and drop-off times, do not drive north (away from St. Charles Avenue) on Short Street—it dangerously congests the area in front of De La Vega Hall and the School Office.

* Rainy Day Dismissal is conducted as follows: Grades PK-K and 5-8 dismiss as usual, from Short Street and Zimpel Street, respectively; Grades 1-4 dismiss on Oak Street, from the gate between Rueff Hall and Kimball Hall.

In the next several weeks, you will notice some changes to the drop-off and pick-up areas, namely the presence of orange cones to deter parking along the School side of Zimple and Short Streets during the early morning and afternoon, as well as no-parking signs in those areas.

We will also be distributing simple family name signs that we would like for each family to place in the driver's side front dash of your vehicle. This will help our faculty to quickly identify your family and collect your child for pick up.

I thank you for entrusting your children to our care, and I welcome your comments and questions regarding our efforts to ensure their utmost health and safety.

Yours,

Mason Lecky

Head of School

St. Andrew's Episcopal School