

The current Swine Flu outbreak is as predictable as our Kansas weather. We are all familiar with weather alerts and tornado warnings. At this time the flu situation is at the alert stage – be prepared. All health agencies from the Centers for Disease Control down to our local Health Department and Catholic School Office have planned diligently for the possibility of a new strain of flu causing wide spread illness. If concerns grow, so will our level of response. Parents and student are important partners in the plan to protect our community. Here is what you can do now:

1. Stay informed. Kansas Health Department website: <http://www.swinefluks.org/>
2. Do not send sick children to school – students must remain fever free for 24 hours before returning to school – without the use of fever reducing medicine.
3. Know the symptoms of influenza (flu) – fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches and possible vomiting and diarrhea.
4. Check Power School to see if the school has your current numbers and who to contact if you can not be reached.
5. Learn and teach cough etiquette. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues.
6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
7. Practice good handwashing – 20 seconds with soap and water. Use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
8. Think ahead to child care needs if schools close.
9. Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and getting adequate rest and exercise.
10. If you have symptoms that could be influenza, contact your physician, who will determine whether testing or treatment is needed.