

Our Lady of Victories School
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Dear Parents,

As expected, there is now a confirmed case of COVID-19 here in Bergen County, New Jersey. While the CDC and WHO feel that it may soon be declared a worldwide pandemic, eventually affecting large portions of our population, widespread transmission within communities has **not** yet been occurring. They are still learning about this illness; **it may range from mild like a common cold to pneumonia**. Thus far, deaths have mainly been reported in **older adults with multiple, chronic health issues**. So there is **no** need to panic. We need to be **aware** and **prepare** for any possible developments.

Here are some ways to protect your family:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are fever free for a minimum of 24 hours and illness symptoms are dramatically improved.

It still goes back to the basics. Handwashing is one of the simplest, most basic and yet the best defense we have against any illness! The virus can be killed on surfaces with standard cleaning supplies and disinfectant wipes. Masks are not the answer unless you work in the healthcare field. Otherwise, masks are only used on the ill person to try to protect others from exposure.

Enclosed with this letter is a **checklist** to help families get ready for a pandemic outbreak. In fact, it is a good way to prepare for *any* emergency.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse, Mrs. Halmi, RN or the NJ Covid-19 Hotline at 1 800-222-1222 or your healthcare provider. You can also visit the NJ Dept of Health at <https://www.nj.gov/health/> or visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or visit the Middlesex County Public Health Department website at <http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/Government/Departments/PSH/Pages/2019-CoV.aspx>

Stay healthy!

Mary Ann Halmi, RN
Mary Ann Halmi, RN

TIPS FOR PARENTS ON COPING WITH PANDEMIC ILLNESS

Plan for an extended stay at home during a pandemic.

- Ask your employer about how business will continue during a pandemic.
- Ask your employer if you can work from home during a pandemic.
- Plan for a possible reduction or loss of income, if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have materials, such as books, on hand.
- Plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.
- Ask the school administration how lessons will be conducted/resumed in the event of school closures.

Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples: Non-perishable foods

- ~Ready to eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups
- ~Protein or fruit bars
- ~Dry cereal or granola
- ~Peanut butter and jelly
- ~Dried fruit, nuts, trail mix
- ~Crackers
- ~Canned juices
- ~Bottled water
- ~Canned or jarred baby food
- ~Baby formula
- ~Pet food

Health and emergency supplies

- ~Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring
- ~Soap and water or alcohol based hand wash
- ~Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil)
- ~Thermometer
- ~Vitamins
- ~Fluids with electrolytes, such as Pedialyte®
- ~Flashlight with extra batteries
- ~Portable radio with extra batteries
- ~Manual can opener
- ~Garbage bags
- ~Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

If someone in your home develops viral symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches):

- ✓ Encourage plenty of fluids to drink.
- ✓ Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- ✓ For adults with fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- ✓ **Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers;** it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- ✓ Sponging with tepid (wrist-temperature) water lowers fever only during the period of sponging. Do not sponge with alcohol.
- ✓ Keep tissues and a trash bag for their disposal within reach of the patient.
- ✓ All members of the household should wash their hands frequently.
- ✓ Keep other family members and visitors away from the person who is ill.
- ✓ Contact a healthcare provider for further advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.

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