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Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we begin the school year, school and public health officials are working to keep our children safe and healthy. We need your help to do this. School staff will be asking about symptoms of illness when parents and/or guardians call to report that a student will be absent. Although this is voluntary, it is strongly encouraged. Public health monitors absence data on a daily basis to watch for illness trends. This information will assist public health to make decisions and provide guidance to limit the spread of disease within schools and the community.

Schools will also be closely monitoring the health of students within the schools. Students that are ill will be sent home immediately. Parents are encouraged to maintain current emergency contact numbers as well as have plans in place for ill children.

School officials in consultation with the Winnebago County Health Department may on rare occasions close a school if large numbers of students and staff become ill. Parents will be provided as much notice as possible about school closures but are encouraged to have plans in place.

Parents need to encourage good hygiene practices to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases.

- Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and every time after they use the restroom. Monitor young children when they wash their hands.
- Teach your children to cough and sneeze into the inside of their elbow.
- Be sure to set a good example by practicing good hand washing and coughing practices yourself. Teach your children not to share drinks with others and to try to stay away from people who are sick.
- Have your children receive a seasonal influenza vaccine and make sure they are up to date on all other immunizations. You may check your child's immunizations at: <https://www.dhfwir.org/PR/portallInfoManager.do>
- Children who are ill should stay home from school, recreational/social events, and daycare.

Certain symptoms may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Please refer to OASD Policies for the full list of symptoms. Children will be sent home if they develop a fever or have a single episode of diarrhea or vomiting while at school. **Children with the symptoms listed below should stay home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours (Norovirus may require 48 hours) and/or a physician approves a return to the classroom:**

- **Fever of 100°F or more:** Fever should be normal for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- **Diarrhea:** Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a person's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and/or watery, bloody, or mucus-containing stools.
- **Vomiting:** Vomiting is defined as two or more episodes within 24 hours.
- **Undiagnosed Rash Illness:** Any skin rash of unknown cause may be contagious or require medical treatment, especially with fever and itching. Students with Chickenpox (Varicella) will be asked to stay home until all blisters are crusted and dried. Please report any cases of Chickenpox to the school nurse and/or the health department.

If you would like to receive a monthly report from the health department about the illness trends occurring within OASD, please go to <https://bit.ly/2LtofY9> to sign up and see past reports.

If you have any other questions, please call the Winnebago County Health Department at 920-232-3000.

Sincerely,

Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Division
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