

## Contagious Pathogens and You!



We often receive inquiries from parents regarding the presence of lice, scabies, and other pathogens in our school. The newest requests have been related to H1N1. In response to your requests for information we provide the following information.

We have over 400 people living in our school and on any given day we have families dealing with a variety of contagious pathogens. The two that seem to have gotten the most attention from the general public are scabies and lice, but now H1N1 is also very popular.

As various health authorities have communicated, H1N1 has characteristics that cause concern. It is important, however, to keep this concern in perspective. We have a host of information specific to H1N1 available on our website, and we can print it for you if you prefer that format.

The school, for a variety of reasons, does not communicate to parents when a child is diagnosed with lice, scabies, H1N1, or any other pathogen. When a parent does call us because their child is affected we help them find the information they need and we require them to have their child treated before they return to school.



The Department of Health is the agency we all depend on to make public announcements relative to epidemics. Again we remind you that on any given day we commonly deal with families who have children that have contracted infected pathogens like lice or scabies.

Lice are definitely a nuisance, but please be careful how you react if your child catches them. Make sure your body language communicates that everything is all right. Do not make them feel badly or inadvertently scare or embarrass them. You really need to love them and let them know that it is only a nuisance and together you will deal with it.

It is wise to regularly check your child for lice and scabies and should your child contract lice or scabies, make sure you follow the treatment detailed by the Department of Health. There is more to it than just applying shampoo or lotion.



Make sure you speak to your child about good hygiene. Washing hands regularly and not sharing clothes, especially hats, is always good advice. Some parents also feel more comfortable when they tie their child's hair back in a pony tail or bun, though this may not prevent them from catching lice. The use of Tea Tree Oil Shampoo has been said to reduce the likelihood of contracting lice and you should be aware that one of the more modern modes of contraction has been earphones from mp3 players. Students should not share their headphones.

We thank you for your continued support of our school, and we encourage everyone to reflect on this memo, but please do not over react. If we can assist you in anyway please do not hesitate to call.