



**Decatur County Health Department
315 S. Ireland St.
Greensburg IN, 47240**

Dear Parents,

Decatur County Health Department officials, in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Education, have ordered all students to be dismissed from St. Mary's schools. This order is necessary due to high absentee rates due to influenza-like illnesses. Indiana guidelines require schools to close when absenteeism reaches 20% or more students.

The student dismissals are planned begin on Wednesday February 12th and to extend through Friday, February 14th to reduce contact among children and stop the spread of the flu. This will also allow staff to extensively clean and disinfect throughout the building.

We know that many students and their families are very sick. We know this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

Because the influenza virus is easily spread from person to person, it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, both children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. They should not gather in other locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters, or community centers.

We know that it may be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic, or even be examined in a hospital emergency room. Here are some tips for helping family members who are sick with the flu:

- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water) or eat ice chips
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) (Contact your pharmacy for correct dosage based on sick person's weight). **Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers;** it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

For more information, contact your health care provider or visit the Decatur County Health Department Web site at <https://www.in.gov/localhealth/decatourcounty>.

We are working closely with school administrators and will provide any updates if they occur.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary McCullough
Medical Director