



Dear parents and carers

With borders opening and the arrival of colder weather, cases of influenza (the flu) are increasing throughout Victoria. Our community is at risk of higher rates of students and staff affected by the flu or COVID-19 this season.

What to do if your child gets sick

To help keep your child and our school community safe, please take the following steps if your child has any cold or flu-like symptoms:

- take a COVID-19 test and follow the current [Department of Health isolation requirements](#) if a positive result is shown
- keep your child at home until their symptoms pass
- common flu-like symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose, loss of appetite, body aches and feeling extremely weak and tired
- diagnosis of the flu can only be confirmed by a doctor after a nose or throat swab
- encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and ask them to cover their nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing.

COVID-19 vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines are available free of charge to everyone aged 5 years and over in Australia.

It is important that children and young people have the best possible protection against the flu and COVID-19 by getting vaccinated.

Ensuring your children are protected against serious illness helps to protect everyone in our community, including older family members who may be at higher risk, along with younger children who can't receive vaccinations yet.

You can book COVID-19 vaccinations through the COVID-19 hotline on 1800 675 398 or at a participating GP, pharmacy, or community health service.

Some local schools are also holding walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinics on school grounds. Vaccination settings can be found at the [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

Flu vaccination

Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and over.

Some people are more at risk of complications from the flu and are eligible for free vaccination under the [National Immunisation Program](#) including:

- anyone aged 65 years and older
- pregnant women (at any stage of [pregnancy](#))
- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged from 6 months and over
- people 6 months or older with:

- [heart disease](#)
- [chronic lung disease](#) (including people with severe [asthma](#) who require frequent hospital visits)
- chronic neurological conditions
- impaired immunity
- haemoglobinopathies (blood disorders caused by genetic changes)
- [diabetes](#)
- [kidney disease](#)
- children on long-term aspirin therapy from 6 months to 10 years
- children aged from 6 months to under 5 years.

Flu vaccinations can be booked through GPs and pharmacies, many of which can also provide COVID-19 vaccinations. If you would like more information about the flu vaccination, visit the [Better Health Channel](#).

Kind regards

Manuela Watson

St Fidelis PS Principal