Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.

**Florida
HEALTH**
Pasco County

Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

May 21, 2018

Dear Parents,

For the past week, a number of Pasco County Schools have experienced an increase in gastrointestinal illness (stomach illness) among students and staff. Please note the following information:

Gastrointestinal illnesses can be caused by viruses, bacteria and less commonly parasites. Symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, low-grade fever, fatigue, headaches and abdominal pain. Most cases are mild, lasting one to three days, but severe complications such as dehydration can occur. This illness can be easily spread from person-to-person. The organism can be found in the stool and vomit of infected people. Individuals can become infected in several ways, including eating food, drinking liquids, touching surfaces or objects that are contaminated and then touching their mouth.

Please note: Students, employees, or volunteers should not return to school until they are symptom free for at least 48 hours.

The single most important measure for preventing spread of this illness is good hand washing. Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after bathroom visits, before handling food, and before eating. Additionally, when finished washing and drying your hands, use a paper towel to shut off the water faucet and when touching bathroom door-knobs. Note: Hand sanitizers are _not_ against many viruses that cause gastrointestinal illness.

If you or anyone in your family is experiencing severe symptoms or symptoms lasting longer than 3 days, you should consult with your family physician.

Please contact the Florida Department of Health in Pasco County, Epidemiology Program at (352) 521-1450 option #2 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Napier
Health Officer
Florida Department of Health in Pasco

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