With winter truly upon us it is a good time to remind students, parents and the school community not to be complacent about flu as it is a highly contagious and serious disease.

Symptoms may include sudden fever, cough, muscle aches and pains, fatigue, headache, sore throat or a stuffy or runny nose.

If your child has flu-like symptoms, the following is advised:

- keep your child at home and don’t send them to school;
- avoid letting them visit aged care facilities and hospitals, if possible, so that they don’t pass the infection to others who may be at risk of complications;
- ensure your child washes their hands regularly with soap and water or uses a alcohol based hand gel;
- encourage them to cough into a tissue;
- make sure they dispose of tissues quickly and wash their hands;
- if a tissue is not immediately available, sneeze or cough into elbow, not hands;
- use warm water and a neutral detergent to keep surfaces such as door handles, kitchen bench tops, phones and toys clean;
- ensure they drink plenty of fluids and get lots of rest; and
- paracetamol is useful for relieving symptoms, but please consult your GP or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) if you are concerned about their symptoms.

Children with some existing medial conditions are at increased risk of complications and parents are strongly recommended to have them vaccinated against influenza each year. These conditions include:

- heart disease;
- severe asthma;
- chronic lung condition;
- chronic illness requiring medical follow-up or hospitalisation in the past year;
- diseases of the nervous system;
- impaired immunity; or
- diabetes

Children aged six months to 10 years and on long-term aspirin therapy are also at risk. Flu vaccine is provided free for these children.