

An Important Note about Hygiene

We have had many questions about proper hygiene...a few years ago we even had a hygiene initiative that was very effective in teaching all of our community, students and adults, about the necessity of good hygiene. I thought it would be a good idea to give a few reminders for all of us to read and remember.

Proper hygiene leads to good health and better school attendance. Also, children who practice good hygiene are better able to avoid possible teasing situations with their classmates. In addressing this situation, it is important to teach children proper personal hygiene practices.

Children need and like routines. As parents, it is up to you to establish these routines for your child. First and foremost it is important to address proper hand washing.



Not only is hand washing sanitary, but it also decreases the spread of illness. Hands should be washed before every meal, before and after handling food, after coming in from outside, after using the bathroom, after playing with pets, after sneezing or blowing their nose. When washing their hands, they should use soap and warm water, lather their hands thoroughly, rub, and rinse (this should take at least 15-20 seconds), and then thoroughly dry their hands on a clean towel.

Other important options to consider are a bath or shower before bedtime or school, paying particular attention to cleaning their face, hair, teeth, armpits, feet, beneath fingernails and toenails, behind ears, and in genital areas. It is important to note that children don't need a hair washing every day as it may dry out their scalp; however, it is important to wash their bodies every day.



During bath time, it is not only important to tell your child to wash, but also to show your child the proper way in which to wash. Children will learn better if you demonstrate the technique and then have them practice it with your supervision.

Strong body odor usually does not develop in children until they reach puberty. However, young children can produce an odor if they are not bathed regularly and/or are not dressed in properly laundered clothing. Encourage your child to keep the clean laundry in the properly designated areas and not mix them with soiled clothing. Have your child wear clean underwear daily.

Feet odors in young children are usually due to musty shoes. Your child should always wear socks with a closed toe shoe. When a child doesn't wear socks, bacteria and fungus can grow inside their shoes, creating an unpleasant odor. Along with wearing socks, remind your child that he/she must also change their socks daily.

We may think that toileting habits come naturally, however they too must be learned. Be sure that your child knows the proper way to clean him/herself after using the toilet. It is also important for your child to learn to clean themselves on their own so that they can be independent with this when they enter school.



If your child can follow the steps and techniques presented here, they will be putting themselves in a great position with regard to their classmates and will hopefully avoid being teased because of poor hygiene. You will also find that they will be healthier and less apt to miss days from school. Please feel free to call me with any questions you may have.