



ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY

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Dear Parents,

We have two children at St Peter's who have been identified as having Cystic Fibrosis (CF) and one with Complex Heart Disease (CHD), we would like to make you aware of some important information to enable us to continue to support these children.

GOING TO SCHOOL WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS (CF)

An information guide for the parents

CF is an inherited genetic condition which mainly affects the lungs, digestive system and sweat glands. In CF there is a problem with the protein that controls the movement of salt in and out of the cells. Too much salt in the cells causes mucus to be very thick and sticky and to build up in organs like the lungs.

Common symptoms of CF may include:

- Persistent cough, particularly with physical effort
- Some difficulty with breathing or wheezing with effort
- Tiredness, lethargy or an impaired exercise ability
- Frequent visits to the toilet
- Salt loss in hot weather [which may produce muscle cramps or weakness]
- Poor appetite
- People with CF tend to develop a range of other associated conditions, the most common being CF related diabetes

Almost all children with CF show some symptoms of the disease. Typically they live with mild, moderate or even severe lung disease and gastrointestinal problems. Children with mild or moderate CF usually appear healthy, but this appearance may be misleading. They have to follow a fairly rigorous health regime at home and are required to see physicians frequently. Many children with CF fatigue easily and take a lot of medications to maintain their health.

PEOPLE WITH CF AND CHD HAVE A LOW IMMUNE SYSTEM, THEREFORE OTHER CHILDREN WITH RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES; TUMMY BUGS (GASTROENTERITIS) DO REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT HEALTH RISK TO THE PERSON WITH CF AND CHD.

HAND WASHING AND HYGIENE

Viral infections (e.g. the common cold) are the most common cause of chest infection in CF and CHD. One of the most important things a person with CF or CHD, and the people they have contact with can do is to minimise exposure to harmful germs and bacteria. Coughing and sneezing are common modes of transmission. Simple hand washing and/or using antibacterial hand gel and covering ones mouth when coughing or sneezing prevents transmitting viruses and is the best way to go about this. It is essential that all students and teachers maintain this level of hygiene.

It is imperative that **all illnesses** are reported to the office immediately so that the parents of the children with low immunity can be notified as soon as possible.

If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact the class teacher, learning support teacher or the school administration.

Many thanks,

Carolyn Watson
Principal