[Date Here]

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s),

A student in your child’s school was recently diagnosed with Shigella infection. Shigella are bacteria that cause diarrhea or other intestinal illness. The bacteria can spread from person-to-person. Young children are especially at risk, but people from all age groups can be affected.

The symptoms of Shigella infection typically start 1–2 days after exposure and may include: diarrhea (sometimes bloody), fever, abdominal pain, and a painful sensation of needing to pass stools even when bowels are empty. Some people who are infected may have no symptoms at all, but may still pass the Shigella bacteria to others. Symptoms usually resolve in 5 to 7 days.

Shigella infection is generally spread when someone accidentally swallows Shigella bacteria. This can happen when someone touches his/her mouth after touching something contaminated with the stool of a person infected with Shigella. For example, hands can be contaminated by touching surfaces such as toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, and diaper pails that have been contaminated by stool from an infected person. Shigella can be spread through direct person-to-person contact, or indirectly through contaminated food or water.

You can control the spread of Shigella by making sure you and your child always wash hands carefully with soap and water after using the bathroom, before eating, and after changing a diaper or cleaning stool. After changing a diaper, quickly throw away the soiled diapers in a lidded, lined garbage can, and wash your hands.

If you or your child develops bloody diarrhea, severe non-bloody diarrhea, or diarrhea accompanied by fever, or if you have other concerns, contact your healthcare provider and tell them about possible Shigella exposure (or bring this letter). Your healthcare provider can order laboratory tests for Shigella in stool. **Your child may be excluded from school if he/she is diagnosed with Shigella infection, and will need a health care provider’s clearance to return to school.**

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact the school nurse at: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) at (312) 746-6015.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[Principal] [School Nurse]