

INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND DIARRHOEA, VOMITING AND FLU-LIKE ILLNESS IN SCHOOLS INFORMATION FOR PUPILS AND PARENTS

We are currently experiencing increased reporting of diarrhoea and vomiting in school consistent with viral gastroenteritis. This is often caused by Norovirus, a frequent cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in the community during the winter. The most common symptom of Norovirus is vomiting. Diarrhoea tends to be short-lived and less severe than with other causes of gastroenteritis. Other symptoms include nausea, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, chills and fever. The illness is usually self-limiting in nature and gets better without antibiotics, which are not appropriate for viral illnesses. Symptoms usually last between one and three days. Those reporting diarrhoea and vomiting should **exclude themselves from school until 48 hours after the vomiting and/or diarrhoea have stopped**. This is an important control measure which aims to limit the spread of this infection to others.

GENERAL HYGIENE

The spread of most infectious illnesses is reduced through good hand hygiene. Please ensure that you and your child wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap, particularly after using the toilet, after using a tissue to catch a cough or sneeze, and before eating.

INFLUENZA (FLU)

Flu and flu-like viruses spread easily between people from coughs and sneezes. They can live on hands and surfaces for up to 24 hours. Symptoms of flu may develop quickly and can include: • Sudden fever • Dry, chesty cough • Sore throat • Aching body • Headache • Tiredness • Diarrhoea or tummy pain • Nausea

For most healthy people flu is an unpleasant but self-limiting illness. However, some people can be more at risk of developing severe illness or complications including the following groups: • those aged 65 years or over • pregnant women • those with a long-term medical condition – for example, diabetes or a heart, lung, kidney or neurological disease • those with a weakened immune system – for example, because of chemotherapy or HIV

If you or your child are in an at-risk group AND develop symptoms of flu, please seek prompt medical assessment via NHS 111, by a GP or a nurse who will be able to provide further advice. If you or your child are not in an at-risk group but develop flu like illness and are concerned about your symptoms, please consult NHS 111, your GP or nurse in the normal way.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>