



**GUIDANCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF
CHILDREN'S ILLNESSES – 'NOROVIRUS & INFLUENZA TYPE'**
(Guidelines devised in conjunction with Public Health England)

Norovirus:

Pupils -

- Children who become ill during the school day will be sent home as soon as possible.
- Parents will be reminded verbally that the child must remain off school for 48 hours after the last symptom.
- If the illness continues past a couple of days parents may wish to consult with their GP, but the child may not return to school until clear of all symptoms.

Staff –

- All members of staff are expected to follow the same guidelines and are excluded from working until 48 clear hours have passed.
- Any member of staff who becomes ill during the school day will be sent home immediately.



What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a virus which infects the gut. It causes a highly infectious gastroenteritis which typically lasts for a day or two but may occasionally last for up to a week. It is not a serious illness in healthy children but can obviously cause distress and upset, especially amongst the younger pupils.

Symptoms can be a combination of any of the following:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea

(It can sometimes be associated with a flu-like illness e.g. aching joints and limbs.)

How is Norovirus spread?

Norovirus is spread from the vomit or faeces of an affected person. It is possible for vomiting to occur without warning, especially in young children.

The virus will then be transmitted to others in the following ways:

Droplets

- Droplets are formed following vomiting which is often violent and projectile in nature.
- Diarrhoea is less of a risk for droplet spread but is a possible source if it is not contained in the toilet.

Environment

- The environment can become contaminated via infected hands or from the settling of droplets of vomit or diarrhoea, which are easily transferable.

Incubation period for the Norovirus can be up to 72 hours, but is usually 24 - 48 hours.

In the event of an outbreak:

In the event of a significant outbreak of the virus within this school the Headteacher, or his representative, will inform Public Health and seek their guidance on next steps.

It is essential that parents/carers help us deal with an outbreak in a responsible way to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.

Unfortunately Primary School pupils work in an 'incubator' type environment and infection will spread rapidly amongst pupils, parents and staff.

Influenza :

Pupils –

- Children who become ill during the school day will be sent home as soon as possible.
- Pupils should remain absent from school whilst their symptoms persist – usually a minimum of 3 days.
- Children can return to school once the fever has settled and the parent/carer is confident they are well enough to face the rigours of the school day.

Staff –

- All staff members are expected to follow the same guidelines and will be sent home from work if exhibiting symptoms of influenza.

What is Influenza?



- Influenza or 'flu' is an infection caused by a virus. It affects mainly the nose, throat and the lungs.
- The influenza virus is a constantly changing virus and different strains predominate from year to year.
- Many people who believe that they have 'flu' may in fact have a very bad cold.
- Usually what people call "gastric flu" is in fact a gastrointestinal infection with another virus.
- Some people with flu will also suffer from diarrhoea and vomiting.
- **The highest rates of infection are amongst school age pupils.**

How do you catch influenza?



- Influenza is mostly caught by breathing in air, containing droplets of secretions of an ill person, which contain the virus. **The virus is passed into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.**
- After being infected, people usually take about 24 – 48 hours to develop symptoms.
- Influenza is highly infectious and can spread very rapidly from person to person. Some strains of the virus seem more infectious than others, or cause more severe illness.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

- Influenza is worse than an ordinary cold.
- It usually starts suddenly with a high fever of 38.9-40.0C (102-104oF) which can last 3-4 days.
- Headaches, chills and a dry cough are common, as are general muscle aches and pains.
- A stuffy nose, sneezing and a sore throat can also be present.
- The fever usually decreases after the second day when nasal congestion and a sore throat become more noticeable.
- Some children may also feel sick, or have vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Tiredness can last 2-3 weeks.

Most people, including children, usually recover completely from influenza in a matter of days or a week.

Serious illness from influenza is usually not due to the flu itself, but to secondary bacterial infections causing lung infections (bronchitis and pneumonia) or to a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

- **Please help us to manage infectious illnesses within school.**
- Please keep your child safely at home whilst they are ill.
- Please encourage your child to cover his/her mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, these can then be disposed of immediately in a bin.
- Please encourage them to wash their hands thoroughly, especially when they have been coughing, sneezing and prior to eating.

All children will suffer from illness at some point in their young lives and it is highly likely that the symptoms will first appear whilst they are here at school. We try our very best to care for all the pupils in school and would never see a child distressed or unhappy because of feeling unwell whilst in our care. You can be confident that all members of staff will help to look after your child until you are able to collect them and take over the management of their illness.

