

Advice for parents in School and Childcare settings during the winter.

At this time of year it is common for many respiratory and stomach bugs to circulate, also other illnesses such as scarlet fever and chickenpox, which usually peak in late winter and early spring. Therefore it is important to re-emphasise basic infection prevention and control principles to reduce the spread of illness and infections in school and in the wider community.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) recommend some simple key actions:

1. Follow Good Hygiene Habits:

Encouraging good hand-washing habits is one of the most effective ways to stop the spread. Regularly wash hands in soap and warm water for 20 seconds.

When should hands be washed?

- Whenever they are visibly dirty.
- Before eating.
- After using the toilet.
- After touching any potentially contaminated surfaces.
- After sneezing or blowing your nose.
- After handling pets.
- Before and after messy play.

Using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, binning it and then washing hands will help prevent infection from spreading.

2. Stopping the Spread of Stomach Bugs

If you or your child have diarrhoea and vomiting, washing your hands with soap and warm water and using bleach-based products to clean surfaces will help stop infections from spreading.

Don't prepare food for others if you have symptoms or for 48 hours after symptoms stop.

If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they should stay off school or nursery for at least 48 hours after their symptoms clear up – this will help stop the spread of stomach bugs.

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3. When to keep your child at home

If your child has a fever and is unwell, they should stay home from school or nursery until the fever has passed and they are well enough to attend.

If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they should stay off school or nursery for 48 hours after their symptoms clear up – this will help stop the spread of stomach bugs.

4. Ensure your child is up to date with their Vaccinations

Vaccines are the most effective way to protect you and your child from many serious infectious diseases such as flu and measles.

If you are unsure your child is up to date with their vaccinations please check your red book or contact your GP who can offer any missed vaccinations.

Useful Resources

NHS UK provides easily accessible guidance for parents to [help manage winter illness at home](#).

Our [e-bug](#) resources for all ages can help you to explain and discuss hygiene habits – and why they are important – to your child or teenager.