

Outbreak preparedness information for West Midlands Education and Childcare Settings

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About the UK Health Security Agency

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will be responsible for planning, preventing and responding to external health threats, and providing intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage.

UKHSA will ensure the nation can respond quickly and at greater scale to deal with pandemics and future threats.

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Introduction

During the winter season, it is important that schools are reminded and updated on important health considerations for their pupils/students, parents/carers and staff.

Pupils and staff in education and childcare settings are particularly susceptible to infections which increase over the winter months, such as acute respiratory illnesses (ARIs) including Respiratory Syncytial Virus and COVID-19, and stomach infections such as norovirus. These can be very infectious and cause outbreaks in settings due to the close contact amongst pupils and staff. The spread of these illnesses can be limited by improving infection control practices within the school.

Young children and/or those with chronic illnesses and neurodevelopmental disorders are also at risk of developing complications from certain vaccine-preventable infections such as measles, flu and COVID-19. It is important that they are fully immunised where eligible to prevent any complications and to reduce the likelihood of outbreaks in education and childcare settings. It is also essential that settings have up to date and easily accessible records of children identified as being in a risk group (see page 6 – Influenza risk groups – for more information). This will ensure that a rapid risk assessment regarding the need for post exposure treatment can be considered in the event of individual cases and/or an outbreak situation.

This briefing provides:

- 1. Key messages for head teachers on outbreak preparedness.
- Two checklists on acute respiratory illness and norovirus preparedness including when and how to report outbreaks.
- 3. Leaflets and further information on acute respiratory illness, norovirus, measles, polio and meningitis.

Key messages for education and childcare settings on winter preparedness

1. Be prepared ✓

- Regularly remind parents to exclude their child from the setting if they have symptoms of acute respiratory illness or diarrhoea and/or vomiting or any other infectious disease. Exclusion periods for specific infections can be found here
- Encourage pupils and staff to ensure they are up to date with their UK scheduled vaccines for their age including against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). The routine UK immunisation schedule can be found here.
- Encourage your pupils and staff to be immunised against seasonal flu and COVID-19, where eligible, and have access to personal protective equipment (PPE) (see checklist on page 8).
- Maintain an up to date list of children who are at particular risk of developing serious illness from flu (as outlined below), so that if there is an outbreak you have all of this information to hand to inform a timely risk assessment.

2. Recognise outbreaks ✓

You should consider the possibility of an outbreak where you have two or more cases linked by time and place or an increase in numbers of a particular illness than would be normally expected

3. Report outbreaks promptly to your local health protection team seven days a week ✓

Outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting should be reported to your health protection team as soon as they are recognised.

 West Midlands Health Protection team – 0344 225 3560 option 2 or complete the outbreak notification form (Appendix 1) and email to bat@ukhsa.gov.uk

Suspected outbreaks of acute respiratory infection should be reported to the Local Health Protection Team (details above).

Respiratory infections including COVID-19

You should continue to follow current guidance which describes the measures to manage acute viral respiratory infections in educational/childcare settings (including COVID-19) on a day-to-day basis, and actions to take in the event of an outbreak of acute respiratory illness including COVID-19 within the setting.

Influenza risk groups

Flu can affect anyone but if you, your staff or children have a long-term health condition, the effects of flu can make it worse even if the condition is well managed and you normally feel well. The free flu vaccine is available for those who are pregnant or have one of the following long-term conditions.

Conditions which may increase your risk of serious influenza illness*

- a neurological condition, e.g. multiple sclerosis (MS), cerebral palsy or learning disability
- lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as steroid medication or cancer treatment)
- a kidney disease
- morbidly obese (BMI of 40 and above).
- diabetes
- pregnancy

- a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma
- a problem with your spleen, e.g. sickle cell disease, or you have had your spleen removed
- a heart problem
- had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- liver disease

This list is not exhaustive.

Source: * https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19 (page 16)

It is important for the setting to maintain an up to date record of all those who fall into the above categories. If you or the parents are unsure if a child's condition falls under one of the risk groups, then advise them to speak with their practice nurse/GP to discuss their concerns and establish if they are in an flu risk group.

In the event of cases/outbreak, a risk assessment, including consideration of those in the above risk groups, will need to be undertaken as soon as possible. There will be situations where these individuals may be advised to obtain post-exposure medication/immunisation from their GP, but for this to be most effective this needs to occur quickly after their exposure.

SEND settings (Children with special educational needs and disabilities) may have a high number of students who are at risk of developing serious flu. It is particularly important that SEND schools report possible outbreaks to the local HPT promptly.

More information on the risk groups can be found in the

DH Green_Book_Chapter7 Immunisation of individuals with underlying medical conditions.pdf

WM education and childcare settings planning checklist for acute respiratory illness (ARI)

Date completed Completed by				
Actions to prepare for cases of seasonal flu			X	
Flu vaccination				
 1. Do you have any children and/or staff in clinical risk groups (inclurespiratory, cardiac, kidney, neurological disease, neurodeveloped disability), diabetes, pregnant, etc). If you do, compile a list and establish if the children/staff are to be setting. This information is essential in facilitating a prompt risk a outbreak 	mental disorders (learning e vaccinated at their GP or at the			
 2. Did you know children being offered the vaccine this year are: all 2 and 3 years of age (by their GP or Practice Nurse) all primary school-aged children all year 7 to year 11 secondary school-aged children who are les children over 6 months of age with a health condition that puts th further information and poster is here Most children will be offered the nasal flu spray, in some cases ch 	em at greater risk from flu. Link to			
as an alternative, suitability will be indicated by their healthcare Specialist.	e provider, i.e. GP/Hospital			
3. Local healthcare teams will be in touch with the setting where a seen agreed.	setting-based delivery model has			
4. Parental/guardian consent will be required, and the setting may be collection of the consent forms.	pe asked to assist with			
Respiratory hygiene & infection control precautions				
5. Ensure infection control policies are up to date, read and followe	d by all staff			
6. Immediately send home staff members and/or pupils who become unwell at the setting and remind them not to return until they are fever free and well (see link to exclusion periods for specific infections here). For COVID-19, isolation period is different – please follow the latest guidance				
7. Check that you have procedures for isolating (with appropriate supervision) a child who falls ill during the day until their parents can collect them. This will include a suitable isolation room with hand washing facilities, PPE available if needed (e.g. for staff providing close personal care to an ill child, link to guidance here) – i.e. disposable gloves, aprons and surgical masks (for flu outbreaks), appropriately trained staff and plans in place for transporting children home who would usually use school bus or public transport. The isolation room should be thoroughly cleaned after use (see link to cleaning guidance here).				
8. Reinforce general education for children and staff about washing hands and respiratory hygiene ('catch it, bin it, kill it' message). Use education materials / resources (see resource page)				
9. Ensure disposable tissues are available and staff and children understand the need for using them and how to use them e.g. cover nose and mouth with tissue, use tissue, throw away and wash hands.				
10.Ensure liquid soap and disposable paper hand towels are available at each hand washing facility, this includes toileting areas and classrooms and stock levels adequately maintained in anticipation of increased use				
11. Staff to check, encourage and supervise handwashing in young children, and handwashing / use of alcohol gel (where safe) for visitors when arriving and leaving the premises				
12. If possible and safe to do so, use alcohol gel in places where handwashing facilities are not available (e.g. entrances/exits, and classrooms/settings under supervision), and maintain supplies in view of increased use				

13. Ensure foot operated bins are in use and in working order	
14. Increase regular cleaning of surfaces, equipment and toys using a a disinfectant, particularly frequently touched surfaces – taps, door handles, stair rails, light switches, computer keyboards etc. Ensure stock rotation of toys to ensure clean toys always available. Cleaning is recommended twice daily as a minimum in an outbreak and as necessary. See link to cleaning guidance here.	
15. Maintain adequate levels of cleaning materials in anticipation of increased cleaning (e.g. disposable cloths, detergent, PPE)	
Reporting to the WM Health Protection Teams (HPT) complete the outbreak	
notification form (attached to email) and email to bat@ukhsa.gov.uk or call	
0344 225 3560 option 2 — For all respiratory outbreaks i.e. flu, respiratory illnesses and COVID-19	
16. Early recognition of an influenza/respiratory illness outbreak amongst staff and/or pupils is vital (i.e. two or more cases linked by time and place/higher than expected numbers than usual).	
17. Suspected or confirmed outbreaks of flu/respiratory illness should be reported promptly to your HPT if a person is admitted to hospital or there has been a death related to the outbreak. This is to enable them to work with you to risk assess the situation and to establish if any of the particularly at-risk children and staff are considered for post exposure advice	
18. Maintain high standards of record keeping in the event of an outbreak of acute respiratory illness to help investigate the outbreak (i.e. list of staff and pupil cases incl. dates of birth, GP details, symptoms, date of onset of symptoms of the first case, total number of pupils in the school, location of cases) and have to hand the documentation of the flu immunisation uptake levels	
19. The HPT will undertake a risk assessment and provide further advice .	
Actions to take in the event of a flu outbreak	
In the event of an outbreak: - Discourage the sharing of communal toys/equipment. - Encourage the cleaning of hands and objects when passing round shared toys. - Suspend use of communal soft toys due to problems with cleaning them adequately. - Do not allow children to share objects that may become contaminated with saliva and respiratory	
secretions (e.g. wind instruments).	
20. Avoid bringing children together in large crowds in enclosed spaces (e.g. whole school assemblies)	
21. Inform the school nurse and local authority as per local protocol	
22. Display flu posters (exclusion poster, hand washing poster)	
23. Send information to parents informing them that there is an outbreak and reinforcing exclusion criteria i.e. do not send children back to the setting until they are fever free and are well, and basic hygiene advice. For COVID-19, isolation period is different – please follow the latest guidance	

WM education and childcare settings planning checklist for norovirus

Date completed	Completed by			
Actions to prepare for norovirus (diarrhoea / vomiting)				
Infection control precautions				
Ensure infection control policies are up to date, read and follows:	owed by all staff			
2. Check that you have procedures for isolating (with appropriat falls ill during the day until their parent/guardian can collect the suitable isolation room with hand washing facilities, PPE if ne here), appropriately trained staff and plans in place for transpound usually use school bus or public transport. The isolation cleaned after use (see diarrhoea & vomiting outbreak management of the blank is suitable to the school bus of the blank transport.	nem. This will include a seeded (link to PPE guidance porting children home who in room should be thoroughly gement pack).			
3. Ensure that liquid soap and disposable paper hand towels are classrooms where there are is hand washing facilities	e avaliable in all tollets and			
 Ensure that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available aprons. PPE should be used in line with risk assessments, pridentified. 				
5. Ensure foot operated bins are in use and in working order				
Reporting to the local health protection team				
6. Early recognition of a diarrhoea and/or vomiting (D&V) of and/or pupils/student in a school setting is vital (i.e. two and place/higher than expected numbers than usual).				
7. Outbreaks of D&V should be reported promptly to the local health protection team for a full risk assessment and further guidance using the outbreak notification form (appendix 1) and email to bat@ukhsa.gov.uk (even if the nursery/school is already aware of local diarrhoea and vomiting outbreak management guidelines).				
8. Maintain high standards of record keeping in the event of an outbreak of diarrhoea and/or vomiting to help investigate the outbreak (i.e. list of staff and pupil cases incl. dates of birth, GP details, symptoms, date of onset of symptoms of the first case, total number of pupils in the setting, location of cases).				
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting outbreak control measures				
 9. Immediate control measures to be put into place when an outbreak of D&V is recognised are: Exclusion of cases for 48 hours after all symptoms have stopped, this includes staff 				
 Enhanced cleaning of the environment with a hypochlorite solution (see diarrhoea & vomiting outbreak pack). Effective hand washing with liquid soap and water. 				
Follow guidance for safe management of blood and bodi				
10. Brief all staff on infection prevention and control measures do handover sessions throughout the day.	uring the outbreak e.g. during			
Inform the school nurse and local authority as per local proto	ocol			
12. Maintain high standards of record keeping to investigate the outbreak and help identify the source of the infection by keeping a log (i.e. list of staff and pupil cases including: symptoms and frequency, date of onset of symptoms of the first reported case, location of				

	cases, number of pupils/staff at the setting). These details may be requested if the outbreak is not resolving or diarrhoea with blood in it is reported.	
13.	Remove all alcohol gel in use in the event of a D&V outbreak, as this has limited effectiveness against diarrhoeal diseases.	
14.	Discourage the sharing of communal toys/equipment. Encourage the cleaning of hands and objects when passing round shared objects/toys. Suspend use of communal soft toys (due to the problems with cleaning them adequately), water, soft dough and sand play. Do not allow children to share objects that may become contaminated. There are games/ lesson plans to teach children about infections and infection control, available at the following link Home (e-bug.eu)	
15.	Stop sharing of any food items such as biscuit tins/crisp packets/bags of sweets etc in affected classrooms	
16.	Increase regular cleaning of surfaces, equipment and toys using disinfectant, particularly frequently touched surfaces – taps, door handles, stair rails, light switches, computer keyboards etc. Ensure stock rotation of toys to ensure clean toys always available. Cleaning is recommended twice daily as a minimum in an outbreak and as necessary.	
17.	Advise pupils/students/staff to seek advice from a healthcare provider and have stool (poo) samples taken	
18.	Send information to parents informing them that there is an outbreak of diarrhoea and/or vomiting at the setting and reinforce exclusion criteria (48hours after last symptoms) and basic hygiene advice. Your local health protection team can support you in preparing the letter/information.	
19.	During an outbreak, restrict visitors to the setting as much as possible and any visitors should be advised of the outbreak and the need for thorough hand washing prior to leaving the setting.	
20.	Consider suspending visits to other settings, outings and any organised events such as barbecues, sports days, plays and classroom parties (including whole setting assemblies) until the outbreak is declared over (48 hours of no new cases at the setting which includes both staff and pupils/students).	
21.	Contact the HPT 0344 225 3560 option 2 immediately if there is:- a symptomatic staff member who is a food handler or a possible food source is suspected to be the cause of the outbreak. symptoms of blood in stool reported and or an infection has been diagnosed from samples tested by GP or hospital symptoms occur following a visit to a farm or external setting were there is contact with animals in the 10 days before symptoms start if anybody with symptoms is hospitalised (overnight stay)	

Resources

Health protection in children and young people settings, including education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities (includes posters for managing infectious diseases)

A parent's guide to keeping kids healthy this school term

A parent's guide to keeping kids healthy this school term – UK Health Security Agency (blog.gov.uk)

Best Practice: How to hand wash step by step images

UKHSA handwashing advice (england.nhs.uk)

Vaccine update: issue 348, August 2024, back-to-school special

Vaccine update: issue 348, August 2024, back-to-school special - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Information/ games/ lesson plans to teach children about infections and infection control available at the following link Home (e-bug.eu)

Flu

Checklist

See checklist on pages 8 and 9 for actions to prepare for seasonal influenza.

Flu vaccination programme 2024 to 2025: briefing for primary schools

Flu vaccination programme 2024 to 2025: briefing for primary schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Adolescent vaccination programme: briefing for secondary schools 2024 to 2025 Adolescent vaccination programme in secondary schools for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The flu vaccination: Who should have it this winter and why (Winter 202-4 to 2025)

Flu vaccines for children and young people for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Flu vaccines for children and young people poster

Flu vaccines for children and young people for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Flu vaccination for children: leaflets and posters, available 33 different languages, braille version and audio version

Flu vaccination for children: leaflets and posters - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Flu: 5 reasons to vaccinate your child (Primary School Poster)

Flu: 5 reasons to get your child vaccinated - Primary School (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Flu: 5 reasons to have the vaccine (Secondary School Poster)

Flu: 5 reasons to get your child vaccinated - Secondary School (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Easy to read and leaflet

Protect yourself from flu,

Flu vaccination: easy-read flu vaccination resources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Acute Respiratory illnesses including Covid-19

Living safely with respiratory infections including Covid-19

Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

What are the latest rules around COVID-19 in schools, colleges, nurseries and other education settings?

What are the latest rules around COVID-19 in schools, colleges, nurseries and other education settings? – The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)

New RSV vaccine could prevent 5,000 infant hospitalisations: press release

New RSV vaccine could prevent 5,000 infant hospitalisations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Norovirus

Checklist

See checklist on pages 10 and 11 for actions to prepare for the winter vomiting bug (norovirus) and what to do in an outbreak.

Poster

Further information is available in this norovirus poster and can be displayed for staff and visitors

How to stop norovirus spreading poster

Stop norovirus spreading poster (publishing.service.gov.uk)

How to stay safe from infections carried by animals when visiting a farm

How to stay safe from infections carried by animals when visiting a farm – UK Health Security Agency (blog.gov.uk)

Meningitis

Leaflets

These leaflets describe meningitis and the benefits of vaccination

Signs and symptoms leaflet and poster

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-signs-and-symptoms-poster

Meningitis: signs and symptoms leaflet and poster - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Meningitis: Don't ignore the signs

Don't ignore the signs – Meningitis (publishing.service.gov.uk)Protect yourself against meningitis and septicaemia – In school years 9 to 10

Protect yourself against meningitis and septicaemia - Have the MenACWY vaccine (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Students urged to protect themselves from deadly meningitis: press release Students urged to protect themselves from deadly meningitis - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Meningitis and septicaemia – Important information for new university entrants in England

Meningitis and septicaemia: poster for new university entrants - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Meningitis and septicaemia: leaflet for new university entrants - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Further information for Higher Education can be found at:

Guidance on the prevention and management of Meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia in higher education institutions (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Further information on meningitis can be found on the NHS choices website: Meningitis - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

Leaflets

MMR for all: general leaflet which can be downloaded/ordered in 6 different languages

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mmr-for-all-general-leaflet

Measles information for schools

Measles: information for schools and healthcare centres - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Measles Outbreak resources

Measles outbreak resources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Measles poster: Don't let you child catch it

MEASLES - Don't let your child catch it - Schools version (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Measles: –posters for general public Measles: posters for the general public

MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine
MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Measles easy read fact sheet

Measles easy read (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Think measles: It's not just a kids' problem - poster

Think Measles! (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Pertussis (whooping cough)

Whooping cough

Whooping cough - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Information for individuals who have whooping cough

Information for individuals who have whooping cough - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Whooping cough: vaccination in pregnancy programme resources: leaflets & posters Whooping cough: vaccination in pregnancy programme resources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Appendix 1



Please use the link below if you need to report an outbreak to the Health Protection team (HPT) and complete the on-line form. Once the completed form has been received by the HPT, we will endeavour to contact you by either phone or email within 24 hours during working hours Monday - Friday. If this has been sent for information only, and no advice is required, we will record the information and close but please do contact us again if further advice is required or the situation escalates.

https://surveys.phe.org.uk/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=I7K288I02

If you have any technical difficulties accessing the link above please complete the outbreak notification form below and email it to the HPT.

Outbreak Notification form (please do not record any personally identifiable information on this form). Please email the form to our business admin team once completed bat@ukhsa.gov.uk

Questions for setting to complete					Comments		
Date of notification:							
Form completed by: (name & role)							
Name and address & type of setting: Nursery/ Primary/							
		EN/Boarding sc					
Contac	t deta	ils - telephone	number and ema	<u>il</u>			
Please	tick b	elow what infe	ction you are rep	orting.			
Scarle	et	Chicken	Diarrhoea &	Respiratory	Har	nd Foot & Mouth	other (record details)
fever	*	pox*□	or vomiting	e.g., Flu *□			
Details	of the	outbreak:					
1)	Tota	l number of ch	ildren attending t	the setting		1).	
2)	Tota	l number of sta	aff employed.			2).	
3) Number of classes, rooms, year groups affected (including					-		
nursery if applicable)					3).		
4) Total number of children/staff (cases) in each affected					4).		
room/class/year group				5)- staff:			
5) Total number of cases symptomatic in each affected				-children:			
room/class/year group					6).		
6) Date of onset of symptoms in first case?					7).		
7) Date of onset of symptoms in most recent case?				8).			
8) Nature of symptoms? (e.g., diarrhoea)					9).		

9) Are any staff cases involved in food handling?	
10) If known, has there been any tests or clinical assessments	10).
by a doctor taken place? What were the results of test if known?	11).
11) Has anybody affected required admission to hospital (overnight admission)?	
Have there been any parties/events held at the school or parties you are aware of outside of school attended by children/staff within the last 72 hours?	
Has there been any school trips attended by the symptomatic children/staff in the last 72 hours? Please provide details.	
Has there been any concerns from parents?	
Are there any cases or contacts within the affected group at higher risk from severe disease (those whose conditions can cause low immunity)	
Are there any pregnant staff who have been in contact with the symptomatic cases	
Do you keep records of children's/staff vaccinations (for example for MMR and Flu vaccine)	
What languages do parents predominantly speak? (if we have specific infection letters & leaflets in different languages, we will endeavour to provide them)	
Do you have any a particular concerns/questions you would like to discuss	

^{*}If you have cases of scarlet fever & chicken pox or flu infection within the school at the same time, please tick each of the boxes in the appropriate section above.

The West Midlands Health Protection team will review this form and either email you back or call you within 24hrs during working days Monday – Friday.

National guidance is available on GOV UK website entitled <u>'Health protection in children and young people settings, including education'</u>. The following are links to the individual chapters for ease of reading. This guidance will provide you with the information required to reduce risk of infection spread within your setting especially during an outbreak.

1.	What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection	What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
2.	Prevention and Controlling infections	Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
3.	Supporting immunisation programmes	Supporting immunisation programmes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
4.	Managing outbreaks and incidents	Managing outbreaks and incidents - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
5.	Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z	Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

6.	Specific settings and populations: additional health protection considerations	Specific settings and populations: additional health protection considerations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
7.	Children and young people settings: tools and resources (including exclusion table, posters, checklists)	Children and young people settings: tools and resources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
8.	Online tool developed specifically to teach children and young people (ages 3 to 16) & staff about hand hygiene and the spread of infections.	Home (e-bug.eu)