

Winter 2018/2019

Dear parent/guardian or staff member,

RE: Flu-like illness at School

This letter is to inform you that we have received reports of a number of children absent from the school with a flu-like illness in recent days and consider it likely that a flu (influenza) virus is circulating within the school. This is to be expected at this time of year and is in-line with what we are seeing in the local community.

It is important that your **child stays at home if they have flu-like symptoms**. Your child should not attend school and not mix with others outside the home if they have symptoms. Those who do not have symptoms of flu can undertake their usual activities outside of the home as normal.

General infection control practices and good hand hygiene can help to reduce transmission of all viruses, including flu. This includes:

- Covering the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of flu virus from hands to face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) using a normal cleaning product.

Most children will have a relatively mild illness, and will recover at home without needing treatment. However, if your child has a complex medical history (including risk groups below) it is important that your GP promptly assesses your child if they develop any of the following symptoms: sudden fever (38oC or greater) and flu-like symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose, limb/joint pain or headache).

They will then advise whether your child should receive antiviral treatment. Children in these medical risk groups who have not had a flu vaccine this winter may also be assessed by their GP in case they would benefit from a course of preventative antiviral medication.

I have attached a fact sheet for your information. If you would like further advice on flu please either contact NHS 111 or visit nhs.uk/conditions/flu.

Yours faithfully,

The South East Health Protection Team

Risk groups for complications of influenza

- Chronic (long-term) lung/airway diseases (including severe asthma requiring steroids)
- Chronic heart disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic neurological disease, or learning disability
- Diabetes
- Weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)
- No spleen or dysfunction of the spleen
- Pregnancy
- Morbid obesity (BMI \geq 40)