

Health Protection – Red Bag Update November 2022

Immunisations

Thank you for continuing to support the School Age Immunisation Service with this year's flu vaccinations.

Please continue to promote flu and COVID-19 vaccinations to any of your staff that are eligible for them. Not only will this protect them but also help reduce the risk to their families, colleagues, and the wider community - some of whom may be vulnerable.

If you have provision for 2–3-year-olds in your setting, please help to promote all immunisations for this age group but particularly the flu programme this time of year.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has produced a useful blog that you may wish to share with parents:

As this is the first winter without pandemic restrictions in two years, you and your children may be more susceptible to the usual winter bugs and viruses this year. Winter bugs and viruses are usually mild, but can sometimes become more serious, particularly in younger children or if an infection spreads to a vulnerable family member.

Read the whole blog via the link below

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/10/25/5-ways-to-protect-your-under-5s-this-winter/>

Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)

As well as flu and COVID-19 there are several other infectious diseases circulating this winter. To help prevent the spread of illness remember your simple IPC measures:

Respiratory and cough hygiene

Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Covering the nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing can reduce the spread of infections.

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways of controlling the spread of infections, especially those that cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting that can be spread by touching surfaces.

All children and staff should have access to liquid soap, warm water and paper towels. **Alcohol hand gel is not effective against organisms that cause gastroenteritis, such as norovirus.**

Advise all children, young people and staff to clean their hands after using the toilet, before eating or handling food, after playtime and after touching animals.

Educate children and young people on why respiratory hygiene is so important. Free resources to support this have been developed by UKHSA with teachers for ages 3 to 16 and are available at <https://www.e-bug.eu/>.

Cleaning

Keeping education and childcare settings clean, including toys and equipment, reduces the risk of transmission. Effective cleaning and disinfection are critical in any education or childcare setting, particularly when food preparation is taking place.

Cleaning with detergent and hot water is normally all that is needed as it removes the majority of germs that can cause diseases.

Ventilation

Ventilation is the process of introducing fresh air into indoor spaces while removing stale air. Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help dilute air that contains viral particles and reduce the spread of respiratory infections.

All education and childcare settings should keep occupied spaces well ventilated to help reduce the number of respiratory germs. Open windows and doors as much as possible to let fresh air in (unless it is unsafe to do so, for example, do not keep fire doors open).

Where an area of poor ventilation has been identified, there are several simple measures that can be taken to resolve this (please see the Indoor air quality briefing note). Further information is also available at: [Ventilation to reduce the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)



Indoor air quality
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Managing Infections

Key information is presented below – further information can be accessed through the links in the Guidance section.

Flu	A very infectious respiratory illness which spreads quickly in crowded population and enclosed spaces. Adults and children with symptoms of flu are advised to remain at home until they have recovered.
Other respiratory infections (including COVID-19)	Range of symptoms including a runny nose, high temperature, cough and sore throat. Children and young people should not attend if they have a high temperature and are unwell. Children or young people with a positive COVID-19 test result stay at home for 3 days after the day they took their test. Staff with a positive COVID-19 test result should stay at home for 5 days after the day they took the test.
Chickenpox	Normally circulates between March and May Children with chickenpox should be sent home until all blisters have crusted over Inform the UKHSA Health Protection Team (HPT) if you have scarlet fever circulating at the same time as chickenpox
Diarrhoea and vomiting	All cases of D&V should be regarded as potentially infectious People with D&V should stay at home and not attend the setting until 48 hours after D&V symptoms have stopped

	You should emphasise the need for good handwashing practices in the setting
Scarlet fever	<p>A bacterial illness caused by group A streptococcus</p> <p>Children need to be treated with antibiotics for scarlet fever</p> <p>They can return to their education setting 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment.</p> <p>If there is an outbreak of scarlet fever within the education/childcare setting, your HPT should be informed. You should also inform the HPT if there is chickenpox circulating in the setting at the same time as scarlet fever</p>

Guidance

There are several government publications that will help you manage and report infections in your setting including a clear exclusion table that allows you to quickly identify which infections mean children should stay at home.

[HPECS guidance Exclusion table.pdf](#)

[Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Supporting immunisation programmes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Managing outbreaks and incidents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Specific educational settings and populations: additional health protection considerations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Children and young people settings: tools and resources - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Early Years \(e-bug.eu\)](#)

Reporting and Contact Details

If you need to report any outbreaks, please use the contacts below:

UKHSA Health Protection Team Yorkshire and Humber:

0113 386 0300 – 9am-5pm Mon-Fri

0151 909 1219 – out of hours advice

Public Health team NYCC - if you need additional support after you have spoken to the HPT you can email dph@northyorks.gov.uk

For COVID-19 specific questions or issues email education.COVID19@northyorks.gov.uk