



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Winter readiness information for primary and secondary schools and nurseries in Yorkshire and the Humber

About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.

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Introduction

As winter approaches, it is important that schools and nurseries are reminded and updated on important health considerations for their pupils/students, parents/carers and staff.

Pupils and staff in schools are particularly susceptible to infections which increase over the winter months, such as seasonal influenza (flu) and stomach infections (such as norovirus). These can be very infectious and cause outbreaks in school settings due to the close contact amongst pupils and staff. The spread of these illnesses can be limited by improving infection prevention and control practices within the school.

Young children and those with chronic illnesses are also at increased risk of developing complications from certain vaccine-preventable infections such as flu, measles and meningitis. It is important that they are routinely immunised to prevent any complications and to reduce the likelihood of outbreaks in a school setting. You may be aware that there has been an increase in measles this year across England, including in Yorkshire and the Humber. Measles can be prevented through immunisation. Some useful information about measles and meningitis is included in the resource section. It is important that children are immunised against these infections.

Almost half (45.1%) of fuel poor households have one or more children under the age of 16 living in the household. Fuel poverty occurs when a household cannot afford to keep their home adequately warm at a reasonable cost and is largely preventable. Children living in cold homes are more than twice as likely to suffer from a variety of respiratory problems compared to children living in warm homes, and resistance to illnesses such as cold and flu can be reduced. Mental health is also negatively affected by fuel poverty and cold housing - more than 1 in 4 adolescents living in cold homes are at risk of multiple mental health problems. Each local authority will have support available for households living in fuel poverty, such as energy efficiency schemes and advice. It is important that those working with children in school and nursery settings are aware of the support available and how to signpost families as appropriate.

This briefing provides:

1. Key messages for head teachers, nursery managers and all staff in schools and nursery settings on winter preparedness.
2. Two checklists on influenza and norovirus readiness including when and how to report outbreaks.
3. Links to leaflets, posters including further information on influenza, norovirus and important

routine childhood vaccinations.

Winter-readiness information for primary and secondary schools and nurseries in Yorkshire and the Humber

Key messages for schools on winter preparedness

Be prepared ✓

- Please encourage your pupils and staff, where eligible, to be immunised against influenza.
See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-flu-vaccine/> for a list of eligible adults.
- Ensure staff have access to personal protective equipment (PPE) (see checklist on page 6).
- Please encourage your pupils and staff to be fully immunised against measles, mumps and rubella infection (MMR). Two doses are needed by the time children reach school age. For further information please see: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>
- Ensure parents are reminded to exclude their child from school if they have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting. This advice applies for 48 hours after symptoms have stopped as they are still infectious during this period. Children with confirmed flu can return to school once they are symptom free and fit and well.
- Ensure staff are aware of the support that is available for families living in cold households and know how to signpost families as appropriate via this link: <https://www.mecclink.co.uk/yorkshire-humber/affordable-warmth/>

2. Recognise outbreaks ✓

| Seasonal flu outbreak definition | Norovirus outbreak definition |
|---|---|
| An outbreak is defined as: the occurrence of 2 or more cases of flu-like illness* and/or confirmed cases, with a shared exposure such as attending the same school group (such as a class group), with onset dates within a single 7-day period. <i>* A definition of a flu-like illness suitable for schools and nurseries:</i> - Sudden onset of fever >37.5°C(not always be present in children) AND - Cough or sore throat | An increase in the number of diarrhoea and/or vomiting sickness absences above the normal rate (overall in the school or in pupils and/or staff linked by place). |

3. Report outbreaks to your local health protection team ✓

Should your school or nursery suspect an outbreak, please ensure you report it to your local Health Protection Team as follows:

Yorkshire and the Humber Health Protection Team – 0113 3860300

If you are not within the Yorkshire and the Humber region:

www.gov.uk/health-protection-team

Schools and nurseries planning checklist for seasonal influenza (flu)

| Date completed | Completed by | | |
|--|--------------|---|---|
| Actions to prepare for cases of seasonal influenza | | ✓ | X |
| Flu vaccination | | | |
| <p>1. Do you have any children and/or staff in clinical risk groups (including those with chronic respiratory, cardiac, kidney, neurological disease, diabetes, pregnant and severely overweight)?</p> <p>Children in these risk groups are eligible for the free influenza vaccination which they can access via their GP or via the primary school based programme. Staff in these risk groups are eligible for free influenza vaccination via either their GP or a pharmacist. Further information is in the Flu vaccination leaflet “Who should have it and why”</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/806856/PHE_Flu_Vaccination_12pp_A5_booklet_2019.pdf</p> | | | |
| <p>2. Do you have any children aged 2 or 3 years old?</p> <p>All those aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2019 are eligible for the nasal spray influenza vaccination which they can get from their GP. All children aged 2-10 years (but not 11 years or older on 31 August 2019) are eligible for the free influenza vaccine.</p> | | | |
| <p>3. Do you have any children in Years Reception to Year 6?</p> <p>They are eligible for the nasal spray influenza vaccination through a school-based delivery programme. Local healthcare teams will be in touch with your school where the school-based delivery model has been agreed. Parental/guardian consent will be required, and schools may be asked to support the consent process. This might include assisting with chasing up and the collection of the consent forms.</p> | | | |
| <p>4. Do you have an identified influenza champion who can liaise with the school immunisation provider to make the necessary arrangements for the programme to be delivered in your school?</p> <p>Does your influenza champion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the contact details and the name of the key lead for the school immunisation provider who delivers the programme in your school? • Ensure that this school based immunisation programme is discussed at staff meetings so staff can support the consent process and the planning and delivery of the programme in the school? • Include a flu bulletin to promote the programme in any school communications to parents/carers and school events which parents are invited to? • Discuss with teaching staff the possibility of including classroom-based activities/ PSHE/assemblies about flu and immunisation, with clear links to the national curriculum (see resource section)? • Have access to easy read resources to provide information for staff, parents/carers and children on the influenza (flu) immunisation programme? • Aware of the support that is available for families living in cold households and know how to signpost families as appropriate via this link https://www.mecclink.co.uk/yorkshire-humber/affordable-warmth/ Is this information shared at | | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| staff meetings? | | |
| Respiratory hygiene and infection control precautions | | |
| 5. Ensure infection control policies are up to date, read and followed by all staff. | | |
| 6. Immediately send home staff members and/or pupils who become unwell at the school/nursery and remind them not to return until they are symptom free and fit to return. | | |
| 7. Check that you have procedures for isolating (with appropriate supervision) a child who falls ill during the day until their parents/carers 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 for more than an hour) – i.e. disposable gloves and aprons, 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 with a product which has both disinfectant and cleansing properties, so the area does not need to be 'cleansed' twice. | | |
| 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 (whilst waiting for collection) 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 handwashing facility, which includes toileting areas and classrooms. Ensure stock levels are 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 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 under supervision), and maintain supplies in view of increased use. Washing your hands with soap and water is sufficient to remove dirt, viruses or bacteria. Hand gel is not a substitute for handwashing. | | |
| 13. Ensure foot operated bins are in use and in working order. | | |
| 14. Increase regular cleaning of surfaces, equipment and toys using normal detergent, 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. | | |
| 15. Maintain adequate levels of cleaning materials in anticipation of increased cleaning (e.g. disposable cloths, detergent, PPE). | | |
| Reporting and outbreak to the local health protection team | ✓ | X |
| 16. Early recognition of an influenza/respiratory illness outbreak amongst staff and/or pupils is vital (two or more cases in 48 hours, linked by place) | | |
| 17. Outbreaks of influenza/respiratory illness should be reported promptly to the local health protection team. (see page 5 for contact details) | | |
| 18. The health protection team will undertake a risk assessment and provide further advice (e.g. infection control guidance and outbreak management as appropriate) | | |
| 19. Maintain high standards of record keeping in the event of an outbreak of acute respiratory illness to help with investigations of 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 and most recent cases, location of cases, total number of pupils in the school and where known, the influenza vaccination status of cases) | | |

Schools and nurseries planning checklist for norovirus season

| Date completed | Completed by | | |
|---|--------------|---|---|
| Actions to prepare for norovirus (winter vomiting bug) season | | ✓ | X |
| Infection control precautions | | | |
| 1. Ensure infection control policies are up to date, read and followed by all staff. Is there a date for review? | | | |
| 2. Check that you have procedures for isolating (with appropriate supervision) a child who develops symptoms during the day until their parents can collect them. This will include a suitable isolation room with handwashing facilities, PPE if needed, 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 | | | |
| 3. Ensure that liquid soap and disposable paper hand towels are available in all toilets and classrooms where there are handwashing facilities | | | |
| 4. Ensure that PPE is available – i.e. disposable gloves, and aprons | | | |
| 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) outbreak amongst staff and/or pupils/students in a school setting is vital (i.e. two or more cases within 48 hours, linked by place) | | | |
| 7. Outbreaks of D&V should be reported promptly to the local health protection team (see page 5 for contact details) for a full risk assessment and further guidance (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 illness to help with investigations of 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 and most recent cases, location of cases, total number of pupils in the school) | | | |

Resources

Influenza

Checklist

See checklist on pages 6-7 for actions to prepare for seasonal influenza.

Leaflet - Flu vaccination: who should have it this winter and why?

This leaflet explains the importance of the influenza (flu) vaccination this winter 2019 to 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-this-winter-and-why>

Leaflet – Protecting your child against flu. Information for parents

The leaflet explains which children are eligible for flu vaccination, as well as describing the disease and the vaccine

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/806857/PHE_Protecting_Child_Against_Flu_leaflet.pdf

Leaflet – Immunising preschool children against flu

Information for early year practitioners working in children settings, including childminders

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741549/Flu_early_years_sector.pdf

Poster – 5 reasons to vaccinate your child against flu

This poster is aimed at parents and explains the vaccine and the benefits of vaccinating children against flu

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807432/PHE_Flu_5_reasons_poster_2019.pdf

Document– which flu vaccine should children have?

This chart indicates which vaccine children should get and who is eligible

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/824016/PHE_children_flu_vaccine_chart_for_2019_2020.pdf

Immunising primary school children against flu

Information for schools

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807147/PHE_childhood_flu_programme_Flu_briefing_for_schools.pdf

Flu vaccination guidance and resources for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-in-schools>

Leaflet - Flu leaflet for people with learning disability

An easy to read leaflet providing information on influenza (flu) and vaccination.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/637939/PHE_Flu_easy_read_adult_flu_leaflet.pdf

Leaflet - Easy read childhood nasal flu leaflet

This leaflet is aimed at children with learning disabilities who are offered the nasal flu vaccination

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-childhood-nasal-flu-leaflet>

Further information and leaflets on influenza can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme>

The Public Health England Resource Centre hosts free resources which can be ordered or downloaded to support PHE campaigns locally:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources>

Produced by NHS Scotland, the ‘You and flu’ film with short clips aimed at parents/carers, children and teachers, can be shown in the classroom and/or assemblies.

The film introduces flu and the concept of immunisation in a fun and engaging way. It also shows the way the nasal spray vaccine is administered:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDmX26NXcHY>

Flu vaccine/flu symptoms/flu vaccine for children

Produced by AbrahamThePharmacist and Bradford City Council, this video promotes the importance of the flu vaccine and explains symptoms and the nasal spray

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fc5YyFNh4AQ>

NHS Scotland have developed classroom activities to support teaching about flu and immunisation. They link to the Curriculum of Excellence:

<http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/2666/classroom-activity-sheets-english-august2019.pdf>

The e-Bug project

This is led by Public Health England’s (PHE) Primary Care Unit in England and involves a consortium of 28 international partner countries. The e-Bug resources comprise of a teacher and student educational pack reinforcing an awareness of essential hygiene and antibiotic issues through detailed interactive lesson plans and an interactive website hosting complementary games, interactive quizzes and disease fact sheets.

<https://e-bug.eu/>

Norovirus

Checklist

See checklist on page 8 for actions to prepare for the winter vomiting bug (norovirus).

Poster

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

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322947/Stop_norovirus_spreading_this_winter_leaflet.pdf

Meningitis

Leaflets

These leaflets describe meningitis and the benefits of vaccination

Protect yourself against meningitis and septicaemia – school years 9 to 13

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796288/PHE_MenACWY_leaflet_for_schools.pdf

Meningitis and septicaemia – new information for students in school and sixth form colleges

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613901/PHE_MenW_A3_StudentPoster.pdf

Meningitis and septicaemia – students preparing to go to university

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/545554/PHE_9909_MenACWY_leaflet.pdf

Further information on meningitis can be found on the NHS choices website

www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/pages/introduction.aspx

Measles

Leaflet

Measles – don't let your child catch it

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810282/PHE_Measles_A5_school_flyer_JUN2019.pdf

Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) Vaccination

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543379/9867_MMR_A5leaflet.pdf

Poster

Measles – don't let your child catch it

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/685233/Measles_A3_poster_Feb2018.pdf