



Date: 9/12/2025

Dear Head Teachers,

Although we are seeing an increase in seasonal illnesses, please be assured that there are straightforward steps we can all take to help keep your school community safe and well.

The following guidance provides comprehensive information to support you in effectively handling these situations: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>.

If you are following the advice outlined in this guidance, there is no need to contact your local health protection team when new cases arise. However, please get in touch if:

- There is a sudden increase in cases, or
- Hospitalisations or deaths associated with the situation being managed.

You can contact us by calling 0300 303 0450, or alternatively by email at London.region@ukhsa.gov.uk.

We've provided some practical guidance below to help you manage the routine infections currently circulating.

Scarlet Fever (Group A Strep)

- Common symptoms: sore throat, fever, mild skin infection.
- If children have these symptoms, contact your GP or NHS 111.
- If diagnosed, they must stay off school for **24 hours after starting antibiotics**.
- Rare but serious symptoms (seek urgent care): high fever, severe muscle aches, localised muscle pain.

Norovirus ("Winter Vomiting Bug")

- Causes vomiting and/or diarrhoea, usually lasts 2–3 days.
- **Stay off school until 48 hours after symptoms stop** and they feel well.
- Wash hands with soap and water to prevent spread.

Respiratory Infections (including COVID-19)

- Most cases are mild; seek GP advice if your child has underlying health condition.
- If your child tests positive for COVID-19:
 - Stay home for **3 days** and return when well and fever-free.

- Adults with symptoms of respiratory infections should follow the guidance available [here](#).
- Adults who test positive for COVID 19 are advised to stay at home for 5 days after testing.

Flu vaccination

- Anyone eligible for seasonal flu vaccination, and has not received it this year, should aim to get this as soon as possible. For more information on flu & vaccination eligibility and how to book, please [click here](#)

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

- Mild illness with fever and rash/blisters on hands, feet, mouth.
- No exclusion needed if your child feels well.

General Advice

- Keep children off school if they have diarrhoea, vomiting, or a high temperature until **48 hours after symptoms stop** and they feel well.
- Practice good hygiene: wash hands, cover coughs/sneezes, clean surfaces, let fresh air in.

You can also use the excellent **e-Bug resources** to teach pupils about hygiene, microbes, and the importance of vaccinations. These interactive materials are available here: <https://www.e-bug.eu/>.

The Department for education blog has some practical steps on how to reduce the spread of illnesses this winter:

[Reducing the spread of illness this winter: Seven steps to healthier schools and higher school atte...](#)

With your support, we can help ensure that everyone stays well, and learning continues smoothly throughout the winter.

Yours sincerely,

UKHSA London Region