



Protecting and improving the nation's health

September 2019

To: Heads/Managers of Nurseries & Schools and School Nurses

Dear Head/Manager/School Nurse

WINTER READINESS 2019-2020

We are writing ahead of the approaching winter, to assist you in preparing for the season and in order to reduce the spread of infection in childcare settings and in the wider community.

The selection of useful documents (Winter Readiness Pack) are available on the following website:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/info-professional/public-health/infection-winter/>

Please do have a look as several of the documents have been updated for this year. Please also make sure that all your school staff are aware and familiar with this pack.

I would suggest that it may be worth printing off and ensuring easy access to:

- 1) Checklist for flu preparedness in schools & nurseries
- 2) Checklist for norovirus preparedness in schools & nurseries
- 3) Integrated Care Pathway (Checklist) for management of outbreaks of respiratory infection in schools and nurseries
- 4) Integrated Care Pathway (Checklist) for management of outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness in schools and nurseries
- 5) Spotty Book – this is quite long, so you may want to print off the front cover and write down the web link on the front cover – to remind people how to easily access it.

Children and staff in educational settings are particularly susceptible to the spread of infections, such as seasonal influenza (flu) and gut infections (such as norovirus) which increase over the winter months. Outbreaks often occur due to the close contact between children and staff. However, the impact can be reduced by following the advice provided and by adopting good infection control practices.

It is important that all children from aged 2 to those in year 6 at school are immunised against flu. Children develop the same range of symptoms as adults and can become very ill, or even die, from flu, but if young children become unwell they are also particularly likely to spread infections to other vulnerable people. Immunising children against flu can therefore protect them, their families, and also the wider community in which they live.

Children aged 2 and 3 years old are offered the vaccine via their GP, whilst those aged 4 – 10/11 years (Reception to Year 6) will be offered the vaccine at school, via

their local school aged immunisation provider. Children and staff in at-risk groups* of any age are also offered immunisation via their GP.

We have developed a number of documents that we hope will help you prepare for the forthcoming season, avoid illness in children and staff and minimise disruption to your services.

The key messages are:

1. **Be prepared** – go through the attached checklists for flu and norovirus and ensure you are prepared in terms of infection control procedures and vaccination
2. **Recognise outbreaks** –the Spotty Book will give you information on how to recognise outbreaks. You should be particularly aware of the influenza, norovirus/gastroenteritis and meningococcal chapters in the forthcoming winter season.
3. **Report outbreaks** to your local health protection team 24/7 -
Tel: 0300 303 8162 Option 1, Option 1

Please have at hand;

- Numbers of affected children and staff
- Date of onset of the first and most recent case
- Signs, symptoms and duration of illness
- Locations of affected cases e.g. one class or year group or all areas are affected
- Any hospitalised cases
- Notify any co-circulating scarlet fever

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact your PHE Centre (see above). Your support in helping to avoid further spread in the community by promoting the advice would be greatly appreciated.

We thank you for your support in this.

Yours sincerely



Dr Fiona Neely
Consultant in Health Protection
SW Centre Health Protection Team
Public Health England



Dr Julie Yates
Consultant in Public Health
Screening and Immunisation Team
Public Health England

Documents are available on <https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/info-professional/public-health/infection-winter/>

They include:

- Checklist for flu preparedness in schools & nurseries
- Checklist for norovirus preparedness in schools & nurseries
- Stop Norovirus Spreading poster
- Hand Hygiene poster
- “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” poster
- Spotty Book – contains information on various infectious diseases in the event of single cases and outbreaks
- Integrated Care Pathway (Checklist) for management of outbreaks of respiratory infection in schools and nurseries
- Integrated Care Pathway (Checklist) for management of outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness in schools and nurseries
- Links to new updated guidance on “Health Protection in Schools and other Childcare facilities”
- Link to “Exclusions” from school table
- Link to “E-bug” – gives lesson plans for primary and secondary schools on infection prevention & control and antibiotic resistance
- Flu Vaccination in school’s guidance