



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

## PHE North West

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HPZ: **215818**

03 December 2019

Re: Influenza like illness / viral gastroenteritis

Dear Parent/Guardian and Staff,

We are writing to you to let you know that a number of students have been off sick with flu-like symptoms.

Symptoms can include fever, an aching body, dry cough, headache, sore throat, diarrhoea or tummy pain, feeling sick and being sick.

Flu/Flu like illnesses can be unpleasant, but if you're otherwise healthy it'll usually clear up on its own within a week. However, it can cause serious illness in those with other health problems. To reduce spread of infection it is important to keep children with any symptoms of flu-like illness away from school until they have recovered, are free of symptoms and have not had a fever for at least 24 hours. Good respiratory hygiene i.e. covering nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, discarding tissues after use and washing hands with water and soap, is also important to reduce the risk to others.

**It is important that any pupil, staff member or household contacts (such as grandparents or pregnant women) who fit into any of the eligible / "at risk" group list below have their seasonal flu vaccine each year.** If you believe you / your child or any household member fits into the group below and has not already had their seasonal flu vaccine, please ensure they get vaccinated **(by your GP or school as appropriate).**

The following are in an "at risk" group and eligible for flu vaccination:

- Those aged 65 years and over
- Those aged six months to under 65 years with chronic lung, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease, or those who are immunosuppressed and those with diabetes mellitus
- Pregnant women
- Those resident long term in care homes
- Those who are morbidly obese (BMI >40)
- Carers - If you are the main carer for someone who is elderly or disabled

Additionally, all children aged two to ten years on 31st August 2019 are eligible for the free flu vaccine.

If you are concerned about you /your child's illness, particularly if you/your child are in an "at risk" group, please contact your GP. If you contact your GP about this, please have this letter to hand.

Further information is available at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/) .

The symptoms of vomiting / diarrhoea and vomiting are suggestive of viral gastroenteritis (also known as norovirus) and it is known that high levels of viral illness are currently circulating in the community.

If your child is affected with these symptoms we would like to reiterate to parents, carers and staff members that children should remain off school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours. This advice will be strictly adhered to for the general health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

We would like to thank you for your co-operation in this matter. Information leaflets about viral gastroenteritis are available from at <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/norovirus-leaflet>

If you contact your GP about this, please have this letter to hand.

Yours faithfully

North West Health Protection Team  
Public Health England