



08 October 2021

Dear parent/guardian,

### **RE: Recent illness in school**

The North East Health Protection Team have been made aware that a number of children attending Farrington Academy have reported recent illness with symptoms including diarrhoea and vomiting and fever. Viruses including COVID 19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and Norovirus can present with symptoms such as these and are a common cause of illness in the community and in schools. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some further information and advice about these illnesses.

### **COVID 19**

For most people, especially children, COVID-19 will be a mild illness. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If your child develops any of these symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home and arrangements should be made for them to be tested. Testing can be arranged by calling 119 or via the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>. If the test is positive for COVID-19 your child should self-isolate at home for 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. If the test is negative for COVID your child should stay at home until they feel well enough to attend school.

Other household members must also stay at home and self-isolate, unless they are (i) below the age of 18 years and 6 months, (ii) have been fully vaccinated (vaccinated with two doses of an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK and have received the second dose of vaccine more than 14 days ago) or (iii) meet any of the other exemption criteria outlined in national guidance:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-forhouseholds-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>.

### **How to stop COVID-19 spreading**

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID19:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

### **RSV**

RSV is a very common virus and almost all children are infected with it by the time they are 2 years old. In older children and adults, RSV may cause a cough or cold, but in young children it can cause bronchiolitis.

In most cases, bronchiolitis is mild and gets better within 2 to 3 weeks without needing treatment, but if you are concerned about your child's symptoms you should contact your GP or NHS 111. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bronchiolitis/treatment/>

### **Gastrointestinal illnesses**

It is not uncommon for viruses which cause vomiting and diarrhoea to circulate among children (for example norovirus, also known as the 'winter vomiting bug'). If your child develops vomiting or diarrhoea, it is important that they stay off school until 48 hours after they last vomited or passed diarrhoea.

In most cases, symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting are self-limiting and resolve after a few days, but on occasion they can be more severe particularly in younger children. If you are concerned, your child's symptoms persist, they develop signs of dehydration (e.g. appear to be passing less urine or having fewer wet nappies than usual), their urine is pink/brown in colour or they have any bloody diarrhoea or bleeding from the bottom you should contact your GP or NHS 11 promptly for advice.



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Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/>

### **General hygiene**

The spread of most infectious illnesses is reduced through good hand hygiene. Please encourage your child to wash their hands frequently with warm water and soap, particularly after using the toilet, after using a tissue to catch a cough or sneeze, and before eating.

If you are concerned about any of the information in this letter or would like to discuss it further, please contact my team on 0300 303 8596 (option 1).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gayle Dolan', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Dr Gayle Dolan Consultant in Health Protection**