

Kelly O'Neill
Director of Public Health

Joint Commissioning
London Borough of Hounslow
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3EB

Your contact is: Kelly O'Neill
Date: 6th December 2019

Dear Parents,

As we move towards the end of term and start the festive holidays there is an increased risk of seasonal illness. This is a result of infections that are more common in the winter months.

Similar to other London areas, in Hounslow we have experienced an increase in respiratory infections, flu, scarlet fever and diarrhoea and vomiting. There has been an outbreak of infection in school. This is common given that children are together, and for some children as you'd expect hand hygiene ability is not as developed as it is for adults.

This I hope is a timely letter of advice so that we can reduce avoidable spread of these infections. We want to do this so that children regardless of their age, parents and the wider family have a happy and healthy festive holiday.

Your schools will have policies that suggest that a child is unwell if they have:

- coughs,
- sore throat,
- sneezing,
- a high temperature and fever,
- diarrhoea and/ or
- vomiting.

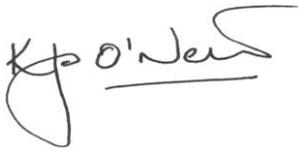
These symptoms spread infection. As parents you know your child best and when they are unwell and should be at home from school. **If your child is unwell, they should remain at home until they feel better and been free of symptoms for about 48 hours.** This is important to allow your child to rest and recover. It also ensures that any infections they may have are not passed to other vulnerable children and adults.

Regardless of the age of your child the initial care advice is the same; rest, drinking fluids, and keeping Calpol available for use. It is also important that good hygiene standards are maintained. Use tissues for coughing and sneezing and thorough hand hygiene for all infections. If you have any concerns regarding your child's health at the earliest opportunity, I encourage you to access a local NHS service. Contact either the 111 service, available all hours every day, or your local health visitor or school nurse service.

Can I emphasise that infections that cause illness at winter time are common. When they occur in schools spread can be rapid amongst friend groups and classes. This can spread to siblings and wider family members in the home. Most illness after a few days will subside, symptoms will reduce and those affected will recover. It is important to be alert to that. Contact your local NHS services stated above for advice if you are concerned.

I wish you and your family a happy and healthy festive period and New Year.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly O'Neill', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Kelly O'Neill

Director of Public Health

London Borough of Hounslow