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## Winter infections in children 23/24

Colds, sickness bugs and other infections are common, especially in children and young people, in winter. Children are particularly vulnerable so ensuring good infection control and prevention (ICP) practices and preventative measures are important to reduce the risk of infections spreading and causing an outbreak. Last year, 10,000 children were hospitalised across the country because of complications after catching flu. As well as reducing risk of serious illness in children, the flu vaccine helps stop the spread of flu in the family and wider community – helping to protect those who are more vulnerable and older people, such as grandparents.

Public Health, Worcestershire County Council, has recently developed some local guidance and advice which you should have received by email. We hope you find this useful.

The local guidance includes general advice as well as links to further guidance about winter infections in children and is aimed at supporting education settings this winter. It includes information about:

- Common winter illnesses
- How infections are spread
- What measures schools can take to stop the spread of winter infections
- How long staff and children should remain of school, if required, for different infectious diseases
- Vaccinations to prevent infectious diseases
- Worcestershire school immunisation service – Vaccination UK
- How and who to reporting infectious diseases to.

Further information can also be found in the following links:

[Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#) -- A practical guide produced by UKHSA for staff on managing cases of infectious diseases in education and childcare settings. Updated 7/12/22.

The [UKHSA blog](#) contains useful articles around respiratory infections including how to be winter strong. [They have also produced a blog aimed at parents](#) with steps they can take now and throughout the coming term to help protect their family from seasonal illnesses.

[e-bug](#) resources - which includes information, games and lesson plans also provide useful tools for teaching children about infectious diseases and preventative measures.

You can also access the local 'Clean Hands Safe Hands' toolkits which include ideas, activities, and messages to encourage children to regularly wash their hands as part of their everyday routine. The key message is washing your hands with soap and water is still the best way to make sure your hands are germ-free as hand sanitisers are not effective against some germs like the winter sickness bug, Norovirus. The toolkits for schools and nurseries to use can be accessed below:

[Download the Early Years Toolkit](#)

[Download the Primary School Toolkit](#)

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