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Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Winter infections at The Orchard School, B68 8LD

Following on from our previous communications, we are liaising with the United Kingdom Health Standards Agency (UKHSA) who are aware of a number of children at The Orchard School who have been unwell with respiratory illnesses and diarrhoea and vomiting bugs, infections which are common during this time of the year. In addition, one person has been confirmed as having flu. Please see the information below which has been provided by the UKHSA.

Respiratory infections

Respiratory symptoms can be caused by several infections including the common cold, [COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\)](#). Symptoms may include a runny nose, high temperature, tiredness, a cough and sore throat lasting 3 to 4 days.

If your child has a high temperature and is unwell, it is very important they stay at home and don't attend school or mix with others outside the home, until they have recovered. Children with mild symptoms like a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if your child has an underlying medical condition and becomes severely unwell with respiratory symptoms (fever of 38°C or greater with cough, sore throat, runny nose, limb/joint pain or headache), or has problems breathing please, ring your GP or NHS 111 for further advice.

It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional. If your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home for 3 days after the day they took their test.

Diarrhoea and vomiting bugs

Stomach bugs are very infectious and easily spread from person to person, but they generally clear up without treatment. Diarrhoea and vomiting are often caused by Norovirus, known as the 'winter sickness bug' – but which can occur throughout the year. Some people may also have symptoms of nausea, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, chills, and fever. Symptoms usually last between 1 and 3 days. The time it takes for the illness to develop is between 12 and 48 hours.

If your child has diarrhoea or vomiting symptoms, please keep them off school. They should not return until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.

The school is taking measures to reduce the risk of further infection, including carrying out a thorough cleaning of the building.

If you need any further advice, or if you are worried about your child, please contact NHS 111 online, your GP, or in an emergency, dial 999. If your child is unwell enough to need medical attention, please do provide a stool sample to help identify the bug causing the illness. You can share this letter with your healthcare provider, so they are aware of the current outbreak.

The attached information leaflet from UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) provides some useful information on both illnesses.

For more information on symptoms and management of viral gastro-enteritis please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/>

We would also recommend that: -

- any children offered the flu vaccine this season should get their vaccine [Child flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/child-flu-vaccine)
- any children offered the COVID-19 vaccine this season should get the vaccine [About the COVID-19 vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/about-the-covid-19-vaccine)

Further information is also available [Living safely with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections guidance](https://www.nhs.uk/living-safely-with-covid-19) and [Respiratory tract infections \(RTIs\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/respiratory-tract-infections)

Please check that your child is up to date with all their [NHS vaccination schedule](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-vaccination-schedule).

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth Hopewell
Headteacher