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Registered in England
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Dear Parents/Carers

Norovirus – commonly known as the ‘winter vomiting disease’

This letter is to advise you that a diarrhoea and vomiting illness, which is present in the community at this time of year, is currently circulating at Houlton School.

We are following advice from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) West Midlands, on managing the outbreak, including increasing cleaning throughout the school and introducing additional protocols, such as antiviral cleaning of pupil desks/regular touch-points in school.

We would be very grateful for your support in helping us reduce the spread of the infection. The best way to do this is to encourage your child to avoid physical contact with other pupils and to wash their hands using normal soap and water more frequently.

If your child has symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting that are more intense than a usual ‘sickness bug’, or are present as symptoms for longer than usual, **please keep them at home until 48 hours after symptoms have ended**, and they are feeling better.

This advice is different from our usual policy and the 48 hours is **a temporary request** which is only in relation to the Norovirus-related symptoms above. During this time, your child should not mix with other children outside the home or visit local venues/events.

Norovirus is commonly known as the ‘winter vomiting disease’ and often occurs in the community and in schools and nurseries at this time of the year.

The attached information leaflet from the UKHSA provides some useful additional information.

Yours faithfully

Michael McCulley
Principal





UK Health
Security
Agency

Stop norovirus spreading

Norovirus, also known as the 'winter vomiting bug', is the most common stomach bug in the UK. It can spread easily through close contact, or by contaminated surfaces, food or water.

The main symptoms of norovirus include a sudden onset of nausea, followed by projectile vomiting and diarrhoea, usually 1 to 2 days after becoming infected. Other common symptoms include a high fever, a headache and aching arms and legs.

Good hand hygiene is important to stop norovirus spreading.

To stop norovirus spreading, you should:

- wash your hands thoroughly using soap and warm water after using the toilet or contact with a sick individual and before preparing and eating food.
- stay off school or work until you have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least two days
- not rely on alcohol gels instead of washing your hands, as these do not kill the virus
- wash any contaminated clothing or bedding using detergent at 60°C using disposable gloves to handle any items
- use bleach-based cleaners to disinfect surfaces

If you catch it, stay home for 48 hours after your symptoms clear

DO ✓

Wash clothes and bedding at 60°C



Wash hands with soap, clean surfaces with bleach-based disinfectants



DON'T ✗

Go to work or school, visit care homes or hospitals



Prepare food for others



Most people will make a full recovery in 2-3 days without needing any medicine. It is important to keep hydrated – especially children and the elderly.

Try not to visit A&E or GP surgeries if you have symptoms of norovirus unless advised to do so by a healthcare professional, as this may spread the bug to others. Call ahead to a GP or ring NHS 111 if you are worried about your symptoms.