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Dear Parent/Guardian

Winter 2019/20 Respiratory Illness

NHS Lothian have requested that we send out the following guidelines.

Unfortunately we have seen a large number of respiratory outbreaks in nurseries and schools in the past few weeks. These have caused service disruption with staff shortages and many pupils being absent from school/nursery.

The main symptoms being reported include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Sore tummy
- Cold/Flu like symptoms
- Headache

These symptoms are consistent with respiratory viral illnesses such as the common cold, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza.

Respiratory viruses are spread by breathing in droplets produced when a person coughs or sneezes. You can also catch the virus by touching the surfaces that the droplets have landed on if you pick up the virus on your hands and then touch your nose or mouth.

Key advice for parents and carers

In the home the risk of catching or spreading flu/cold like illness can be reduced by:

- Regular hand washing with liquid soap and running water
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Using a disposable paper tissue, disposed off immediately after use.
- You can teach your child to sneeze into the 'crook' of their arm rather than their hands, if they don't have a tissue.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQINuSTP1jI>
- Good general cleaning of surface that everyone touches often e.g. TV remote, light switches, door handles, toilet flushes and tap heads.
- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/common-cold>
- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/flu>

Children should not return to school until completely well and 48 hours after symptoms have gone.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Allison
Head Teacher

Useful guidance documents:

Information on the best way to wash hands and on getting children's handwashing packs is available on the website: <http://www.washyourhandsofthem.com/home.aspx>

Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings)
<http://www.playscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/infection-prevention-control-childcare.pdf>

Information on Influenza and the common cold for parents/carers can be found on NHSInform here:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/flu>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/common-cold>

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Education and Cultural Services