

09.01.25 Message from South West Health Protection Team UK Health Security Agency

It's that time of year where we once again welcome those pesky winter bugs! Unfortunately, this is to be expected at this time of year.

We know that you are experiencing a lot of acute respiratory infections amongst your child/student and staff population, with illnesses like the common cold, COVID-19, flu as well as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). While it is not possible to tell which germ someone is infected with based on symptoms alone, for most individuals these illnesses will not be serious and they soon recover.

Key steps you can take to prevent or manage an outbreak of acute respiratory infections include:

- Exclude any individual who has a high temperature and are unwell, until they no longer have a high temperature (without taking calpol or paracetamol) and are well enough to attend the setting. Do not exclude individuals with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well.
- Promote good hand and cough hygiene practices.
- Please continue to maintain robust cleaning practices. During any outbreak we recommend increasing the frequency of cleaning,
- Continue to promote and support vaccination for eligible groups including the [Flu vaccination programme 2024 to 2025: briefing for primary schools - GOV.UK](#), [COVID-19 vaccine - NHS](#) and the [national routine immunisation](#) schedule.

Settings are no longer required to report outbreaks of Acute Respiratory Infections to UKHSA, however we do encourage settings to contact us if they have an outbreak and:

- you are a setting that is **dedicated** to children who are clinically vulnerable
- anyone is **admitted to hospital** (or there is a death).
- you think you have cases of confirmed flu (testing generally only takes place in hospital) **AND** scarlet fever / GAS in the **SAME CLASS** (not just the same year group)
- you are still getting **SIGNIFICANT** numbers of new cases after **3 WEEKS** despite implementing all of the recommendations advised below, and you are still concerned about the situation.

The [Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z - GOV.UK](#) guidance which provides advice on how to manage specific infectious diseases and when to contact the Health Protection Team

The South West Protection Team also continues to run free webinars aimed at providing early years and school settings with information about to prevent and manage cases and outbreaks of infectious diseases. The next webinar will take place on **THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 4-5PM** – you can book your place here [Health Protection in Education and Early Years settings Webinar](#)

South West Health Protection Team

UK Health Security Agency

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