

Respiratory hygiene and general outbreak infection control advice Schools and childcare settings

- Respiratory hygiene is vital – Catch it, Bin it, Kill it - with supplies of tissues readily available, and individuals asked to cover their mouth and nose if coughing or sneezing. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into the inside of the elbow rather than on hands to prevent transmission.
- Careful hand washing with liquid soap and warm water – dry with paper towel (particularly in outbreak situation). If possible, head or class teachers to reiterate the importance of hand washing with the children, after using the toilet/before eating – and to try not to touch their faces, pick noses, or bite nails!
- Consider ‘Sneeze Stations’ around the school/nursery where children/adults can wash hands, or clean with wet wipes, and grab a tissue.
- Regular environmental cleaning with detergent soapy water and disposable cloth, followed by disinfectant or dilute bleach solution – with particular attention to touch points, tables and chairs, grab rails, door handles, and toilets.
- Cleaning of any toys or items played with during the day with hot soapy detergent water -storage receptacles for items cleaned in the same way. Try to prevent small children from sharing items if possible.
- Suspend sand play for the duration of any outbreak of infection, and if play-dough is needed to make up fresh and disposed of after session (as a really good medium for organism growth).
- If possible, children and staff should be asked to put toilet lids down if they experience diarrhoea or vomit, or if no toilet lids little ones can tell their teacher and paper towels can be placed over the toilet basin prior to flushing. Staff should wear disposable gloves and aprons if they need to do this.
- Cleaning vomit or spillages on a floor or carpeted area – if spillage kit is available; ensure staff know where to obtain and carefully follow instructions on the kit. If spillage kit is not available, staff must wear disposable apron and gloves, take rubbish bag to site of spillage, place paper towels over the vomit and absorb as much as possible. Clean the floor area with a disposable cloth and detergent hot soapy water followed by bleach-based product or disinfectant. Dispose of apron and gloves, tie bag and place in general rubbish – then wash hands carefully. Do not mop the area until all these steps have been taken – and ensure that surrounding furniture/vertical surfaces are also cleaned. Wear gloves and apron for cleaning.
- Alginate or alginate strip bags are a good idea for placing items of clothing which may have been in contact with vomit or infective spores such as coats/outer clothing. These can be placed directly into the washing machine and will dissolve allowing clothes to be washed as normal without contaminating other individuals or surfaces.
- Affected individuals must stay away from school or nursery until they are free of symptoms and are feeling well. Children or adults with symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school or nursery until they are at least 48 hours symptom free.