



States of Guernsey  
Public Health Services

# Health Protection for Education Settings

Bailiwick of Guernsey

Public Health Services, October 2023



READER INFORMATION	
<b>Title</b>	Health Protection for Education Settings in the Bailiwick of Guernsey
<b>Document Purpose and key uses</b>	To provide health protection guidance to education settings in the Bailiwick of Guernsey, aiming to prevent and control infections and promote healthy environments.
<b>Publication date</b>	17/10/2023
<b>Target audience</b>	Education settings
<b>Data sources</b>	UKHSA Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education; Devon County Council Health protection for educational settings;
<b>Version Number</b>	1.0

## Health Protection in children and young people settings, including education

This document aims to provide schools and other children and young people settings with information and resources on Health Protection matters. These tools support the preparedness, assessment and decision making around infection prevention and protection measures as well as providing guidance on infections and outbreaks, exclusion periods for different infections and advice around when and how to contact Public Health services/Health Protection Team.

Please note that the links on this document are sourced from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). This ensures access to up-to-date information, reviewed and approved by UK official agencies. **The contact details to UK Health Protection Teams and other support agencies should be disregarded and interpreted under local context** – if in doubt please contact Public Health Services on 01481 220000 or email [publichealth@gov.gg](mailto:publichealth@gov.gg)

Pupils and staff in schools are particularly susceptible to infections which increase over the winter months, such as seasonal influenza (flu), COVID, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) and stomach infections (norovirus, for example). These can be very infectious and cause outbreaks in school settings due to the close contact amongst pupils and staff. The spread of these illnesses can be limited by ensuring there are good infection control practices within the school.

Young children and/or those with chronic illnesses and neurodevelopmental disorders are at increased risk of developing complications from certain vaccine-preventable infections such as COVID, measles and flu.

The latest information on infectious diseases and management of outbreaks in educational settings can be found on [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#). On this link you can also access further information on:

- [What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection](#)
- [Preventing and controlling infections](#)
- [Supporting immunisation programmes](#)
- [Managing outbreaks and incidents](#)
- [Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z](#)
- [Specific settings and populations: additional health protection considerations](#)
- [Children and young people settings: tools and resources](#)

Children, young people, and staff who are showing symptoms of an infectious disease or have been diagnosed by a health professional or diagnostic test, should be advised to stay away from their education or childcare setting for the minimum period recommended, if required, and until well enough. Please view the [exclusion table](#) for further details – here you can find a PDF version that can be printed, but please ensure you are using the most updated version by checking the website periodically.

## When to contact Public Health Services - Health Protection Team

Please contact us on 01481 220000 or email [publichealth@gov.gg](mailto:publichealth@gov.gg) if you experience any of the situation below or if would like to discuss any Health Protection issues.

- A higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection.
- Evidence of severe disease due to respiratory infection, for example, if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital.
- More than one infection circulating in the same group of students and staff for example chickenpox and scarlet fever.
- A cluster of cases where there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable staff or students within the affected group, including special educational needs schools.

## Key messages

Follow the following recommendations to ensure you are following recommended guidance and protecting the children under your care and your staff.

- Stay at home if you have symptoms of an infection e.g., gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) or influenza (flu) like illness and not return to work/school until 48 hours have passed since last fever and diarrhoea and/or vomiting episode.
- Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways of controlling the spread of infections, especially those that cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting and respiratory infections.
- Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing and coughing can reduce the spread of infections. Throw the tissue away swiftly and clean your hands. 'Catch it, bin it, kill it'
- Keeping education and childcare settings clean, including toys and equipment, reduces the risk of transmission. Effective cleaning and disinfection are critical in any education or childcare setting, particularly when food preparation is taking place.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can protect staff and students from contamination with blood or bodily fluids, which may contain germs that spread disease.
- Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help dilute air that contains viral particles and reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.
- Blood and bodily fluids can contain germs that cause infection. It is not always evident whether a child, young person or staff member has an infection, and so precautions should always be taken.
- Keep up to date with vaccinations to reduce the likelihood of infection and severe illness.
- Report outbreaks promptly to Public Health Services - Health Protection Team.

## Infection prevention and control in educational settings

Educational settings are common sites for the spread of infection as children are particularly susceptible. Not all microbes are bad, but there are a few that can cause infectious disease resulting in absenteeism from educational settings and may also cause outbreaks within the setting. Outbreaks and cases of infectious disease represent a burden not only to the unwell child, but to the education setting, parents/caregivers, and the community through days lost in education, parents/caregivers taking time off work and the potential for spread of infection into the wider community. By following the everyday principles of infection prevention below, you will be helping to minimise the impact of sickness with your setting:

- Promptly exclude<sup>a</sup> the unwell child or member of staff as per current recommendations
- Check that effective hand hygiene is being carried out routinely
- Check that effective cleaning/environmental hygiene measures are in place, including safe management of blood and bodily fluids
- Ensure occupied spaces are well ventilated and let fresh air in. Use a CO<sub>2</sub> to check that you have adequate ventilation
- Facilitate awareness of vaccinations as per [Childhood Vaccinations - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](https://www.gov.gg/childhood-vaccinations)

Find more information on infection prevention in educational settings at [Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/preventing-and-controlling-infections)

## How are infections spread in educational settings?

Microbes such as bacteria, viruses and fungi are everywhere and commonly do not cause infection and can even be beneficial. However, some do cause infection resulting in symptoms such as fever and sickness, especially in vulnerable people, such as young children, elderly, people with certain chronic diseases, immunosuppressed and pregnant women.

Infections are spread in many different ways, but the most common routes are through:

- Respiratory spread: Contact with cough or other secretions from an infected person. This can happen by being near the infected person when they cough and then you breathe in the organism; or by picking up the organism from an infected item, for example a used tissue or on an object, and then touching your nose or mouth. Airborne infections can spread without necessarily having close contact with another person via small respiratory particles. Flu and COVID are spread this way.
- Direct contact spread: By direct contact with the infecting organism, for example contact with skin during contact sports such as rugby and in gyms. Impetigo or staphylococcal infections are spread this way. Infections can also be spread via fomites (inanimate objects that can carry and spread disease and infectious agents) such as frequently touched surfaces (door handles, tables, shared equipment).
- Gastrointestinal spread: Resulting from contact with contaminated food or water (e.g. hepatitis A), contact with infected faeces or unwashed hands after using the toilet (e.g. norovirus).

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<sup>a</sup> The term 'exclude' is used in this guidance to define the amount of time an individual should be advised to not attend a setting to reduce transmission while they are infectious. This is different from 'exclude' as used in an educational sense.

- Blood borne virus spread: By contact with infected blood or body fluids, for example while attending to a bleeding person (hepatitis B). Human mouths are inhabited by a wide variety of organisms, some of which can be transmitted by bites. Human bites resulting in puncture or breaking of the skin are potential sources of exposure to blood borne infections therefore it is essential that they are managed promptly.

Find out more about the spread of infections at [What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Where a case of infection is known, measures aim to reduce or eliminate the risk of spread through information and prompt exclusion of a case. Further information about the time period an individual should not attend a setting to reduce the risk of transmission during the

[Managing outbreaks and incidents – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Diarrhoea and vomiting outbreak: action checklist \(khub.net\)](#)

## Hand hygiene

Hand washing is one of the most important ways of controlling the spread of infections, especially those that cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting and respiratory infections.

Ensure that staff and children and young people have access to liquid soap, warm water and paper towels. Bar soap and fabric towels should not be used. If using electronic hand dryers instead of paper towels, then ensure that they are in good clean working order. Drying hands is an essential part of hand hygiene. It is a good idea to keep a stock of paper towels in case the electric hand dryers breakdown.

All staff, children and young people should be advised to wash their hands:

- After using the toilet
- Before eating or handling food
- After playtime
- After touching animals

All cuts and abrasions should be covered with a waterproof dressing.

Hand sanitisers can be used if appropriate hand washing facilities are not available but should not replace washing hands particularly if hands are visibly soiled or where there are cases of gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) in the setting. Please note that most hand sanitisers are not effective against norovirus. Check the manufacturer's instructions for further advice about the product.

Hand Hygiene Posters to download and print out:

[New HandRub Poster \(who.int\)](#)

[New HandWash Poster \(who.int\)](#)

## Respiratory hygiene

Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Covering the nose and mouth during sneezing and coughing can reduce the spread of infections. Spitting should be discouraged.

Anyone with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of the cause, should follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, specifically:

- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, and dispose of used tissues and perform hand hygiene
- Cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) if no tissues are available, rather than into the hand
- Keep contaminated hands away from the mucous membranes of the eyes and nose
- Carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects and materials

Posters to prevent spread of infection:

[Catch it, Bin it, Kill it Poster - Infection Prevention Control](#)

[Coughs and sneezes spread diseases Poster - Infection Prevention Control](#)

## Safe management of the environment

Keeping the setting clean, including toys and equipment, reduces the risk of infection. It is especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot. Cleaning with detergent and water is adequate for day-to-day cleaning as it removes the majority of microbes that can cause infection. In the event of an outbreak of infection at your setting, the Health Protection Team may recommend enhanced or more frequent cleaning, to help reduce transmission.

It is important that cleaning schedules clearly describe the activities required, the frequency of cleaning and who will carry them out. Cleaning standards should be monitored regularly by the setting. All staff with cleaning responsibilities should be appropriately trained and have access to the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, aprons, and fluid resistant surgical masks. There should be a designated area if there is a need for laundry facilities.

Any spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, nasal and eye discharges should be cleaned immediately, wearing appropriate PPE.

Under the waste management duty of care, educational settings must ensure that all waste produce is dealt with appropriately.

Find out more about managing the environment safely, including management of laundry and linen, at [Preventing and controlling infections – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## Ventilation

Ventilation is the process of introducing fresh air into indoor spaces while removing stale air. Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air that contains virus particles and prevent the spread of respiratory infections such as flu and COVID. Good ventilation has also been linked to health benefits such as better sleep and concentration, and fewer sick days off from work or school. Use a CO2 monitor to check that there is adequate ventilation.

Find out more at:

[Ventilation in the workplace \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

[CoSchools - tools for healthy schools](#)

[BB 101: Ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality 2018 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## Infection Prevention and Control self-assessment checklist

This checklist is designed to support educational settings with meeting the required standards to protect all its people from infectious diseases within that setting. All education settings are encouraged to complete at the beginning of term and repeat on a regular basis to help ensure that all measures remain in place. The checklist can also be used to inform the educational settings whole site risk assessment. It supports compliance and adherence with the infection prevention and control measures that are required to meet those standards.

Self-assessment checklist for infection prevention and control [IPC self-assessment checklist 10.2023](#)

## Teaching resources

[Home \(e-bug.eu\)](https://www.e-bug.eu) e-Bug provides free resources for educators, community leaders, parents, and caregivers to educate children and young people and ensure they can play their role in preventing infection outbreaks and using antimicrobials appropriately.

[Join Us On A Germ's Journey | A Germ's Journey \(germsjourney.com\)](https://www.germjourney.com) A Germ's Journey (germsjourney.com) explore a germ's journey and the importance of handwashing, through games, activities and informational tools.

## Vaccinations

Immunisation is a key intervention to help give children the best start in life. Babies up to 12 months old receive their vaccinations at their Primary Care practice, and children aged 3 years and 4 months old (or soon after this age) receive their pre-school boosters at Lukis House. The School Nurseing Team contact primary and secondary schools directly to arrange clinics for eligible children. The team also send information around the vaccine programmes to parents and carers to support decision making. Vaccinations are planned and timed to



be given to children when they are at greatest risk of infection and most likely to experience the severe consequences of the disease. Further information about how you can support immunisation in schools with the school aged immunisation team, as well as the full immunisation schedule for children if required can be found in the [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education guidance](#).

### Flu and Covid-19

The latest guidance around eligibility for first, second and booster doses of Covid-19 vaccine are available on [COVID-19 Vaccination Programme - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](#)

### HPV

The HPV vaccine helps protect against cancers caused by HPV, including cervical cancer, some mouth and throat cancers and some cancers of the anal and genital areas. It also helps protect against genital warts. In Guernsey and following national recommendations, girls and boys aged 12 to 13 years are routinely offered the HPV vaccination when they're in school Year 8. The School Nursing team will contact schools to arrange dates for vaccinations and provide required information to be shared with parents and students.

### School Year 9 vaccinations for tetanus, diphtheria, polio and meningococcal A, C, W and Y

The teenage booster, also known as the 3-in-1 or the Td/IPV vaccine, is given to boost protection against 3 separate diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and polio. The MenACWY vaccine is also given at the same time. Both vaccines are routinely given at secondary school during school year 9. Again, the School Nursing team will contact schools to arrange dates for vaccinations and provide required information to be shared with parents and students.

Further information about these and other vaccines can be found at:

[Vaccinations – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Childhood Vaccinations - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](#)

[Immunisation against infectious disease - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## Other useful resources

### Flu

[Flu vaccination: simple text information for adults and children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-leaflets-and-posters>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/which-flu-vaccine-should-children-have>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-in-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-childhood-nasal-flu-leaflet>

<https://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/how-to-wash-your-hands-video/>

### COVID-19

[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](#)

[COVID-19 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Coronavirus information - Infection Prevention Control](#)



**Norovirus**

<https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Norovirus/Documents/Norovirus%20PDF.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stop-norovirus-spreading-this-winter-leaflet>