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3 March 2025

Secondary – Gastroenteritis

Dear parent / carer

I am writing to inform you that we have received confirmation that a small number of students across years 7-11 are currently off school with a vomiting bug.

I would like to reassure you that our school is very careful to make sure everyone follows the latest government and public health guidance for the management of specific infectious diseases.

What is Diarrhoea and Vomiting (Gastroenteritis)?

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting (gastroenteritis) may be due to a variety of causes including germs, toxins or non-infectious diseases. However, as a general rule, all cases of gastroenteritis should be regarded as potentially infectious unless there is good evidence to suggest otherwise.

A liquid stool is more likely to contaminate than a formed stool and is therefore a greater risk. Vomit, like liquid stools, can also be highly infectious, including when there is norovirus circulating in the community.

What are the symptoms of Diarrhoea and Vomiting (Gastroenteritis)?

Symptoms can include:

- Nausea (often sudden onset)
- Vomiting (often projectile)
- Crampy abdominal pain
- Watery diarrhoea
- High temperature, chills and muscle aches.

Diarrhoea is defined as three or more liquid or semi-liquid stools within a 24-hour period.

How is Diarrhoea and Vomiting (Gastroenteritis) spread?

People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including:

- Contact with an infected person, especially contact with vomit or faeces.
- Contact with contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- Consuming contaminated food or water.

What can be done to prevent infection?

It is often impossible to prevent infection; however, taking good hygiene measures around someone who is infected can decrease your chance of getting infected.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, including before eating or preparing food and after toilet use.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of vomiting or diarrhoea by using a bleach-based household cleaner.

- Flush or discard any vomit and/or faeces in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.

Can my child stay in school?

It is extremely important that people who have been ill with diarrhoea and vomiting together (gastroenteritis) should remain off school while symptomatic and for two full days (48 hours) after their last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea and are well enough to return. If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea in isolation they should remain off school while symptomatic and for 24 hours after their last episode illness.

Thank you for giving this your attention. Your GP will be able to answer any further questions that you might have about diarrhoea and vomiting (gastroenteritis).

The health, safety and wellbeing of our children and staff is extremely important to us and we thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Mr V Groak
Headteacher