

Infection control management

Baseline infection control measures:

All schools already have in place baseline infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of respiratory infections, including Covid-19.

These include:

- Ensuring that all staff and students who are unwell do not attend the setting. Further guidance on the management of specific infectious diseases, including advised exclusion periods can be found in [chapter 3](#) of the UKHSA Health protection in education and childcare settings document.
- Ensuring all eligible groups are enabled and supported to take up the offer of [national immunisation](#) programmes including coronavirus (COVID-19) and flu.
- Ensuring occupied spaces are well ventilated and let fresh air in
- Reinforcing good hygiene practices such as frequent cleaning, see [chapter 2](#) of the UKHSA Health protection in education and childcare settings document.
- Considering communications to raise awareness among parents and carers of the outbreak or incident and to reinforce key messages, including the use of clear hand and respiratory hygiene measures within the setting such as [E-Bug](#).

When to seek advice from the London Coronavirus Response Cell (LCRC)

Schools should seek specialist advice from the NWL HPT (Tel: 0300 303 0450 - including out of hours) if there is:

- A death within staff/pupil due to respiratory infections, including Covid-19
- An acute respiratory infection outbreak, including Covid-19 in a SEND school with medically vulnerable children i.e. immunocompromised or school carrying out Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs)
- A new or ongoing outbreak in a SEND school or boarding school, without medically vulnerable children (but where school have seen a rapid increase in case numbers)
- A SEND school with difficulties in applying the outbreak control measures due to residential setting or increasing complexity e.g. hospital admissions

When to seek advice from UKHSA health protection team

Most infectious diseases in education and childcare settings can be managed by following the advice provided in [Chapter 3](#) of the UKHSA Health protection in education and childcare settings document. and ensuring children, young people and staff follow the recommended exclusion periods.

Schools should seek specialist advice from the NWL HPT (Tel: 0300 303 0450 - including out of hours) if they are concerned and have seen:

- A higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection or diarrhoea and vomiting [\[footnote 1\]](#)
- Evidence of severe disease due to an infection, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital [\[footnote 2\]](#)
- More than one infection circulating in the same group of students and staff for example chicken pox and scarlet fever

Schools are also asked to contact the NWL HPT as soon as possible to report any outbreak or serious or unusual illness for example,

- E.coli 0157 or E coli STEC infection
- Food poisoning
- Hepatitis
- Measles, mumps, rubella (rubella is also called German measles)
- Meningococcal meningitis or septicemia
- Monkeypox
- Scarlet fever (if an outbreak or co-circulating chicken pox)
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Typhoid
- Whooping cough (also called pertussis)

What information the UKHSA HPT or LCRC may ask for

- Type of setting, for example nursery or special needs school
- Total numbers affected (staff and pupils)
- Total numbers attending (staff and pupils)
- Any food handlers affected
- Number of classes, rooms, year groups affected (including nursery if applicable)
- Symptoms experienced
- Date when symptoms started including a brief overview of the sequence of numbers of new cases since the outbreak started.
- Any indications of severe disease such as overnight admissions to hospital
- Were there any events or trips in the week prior to the start of the outbreak
- If known whether any tests or clinical assessments have taken place
- Vaccination uptake (for example for MMR and other infections)
- If there are any individuals within the affected group at higher risk from severe disease

What actions will be recommended by the UKHSA HPT or LCRC

Having carried out an infection control risk assessment for the school, the UKHSA HPT or LCRC may recommend further actions such as:

- Reinforcement of baseline infection prevention and control measures
- Communication to parents and carers
- Exceptionally, temporary advice to reduce mixing among a targeted group
- Exceptionally, the temporary use of face coverings in communal areas
- Please keep the local authority informed of any actions recommended by the UKHSA HPT or LCRC

Classification of an outbreak

An outbreak or incident may be defined in epidemiological terms as:

- An incident in which 2 or more people experiencing a similar illness are linked in time or place
- A greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred

For example:

- 2 or more cases of diarrhoea or vomiting which are in the same classroom, shared communal areas or taking part in the same activities
- higher than usual number of people diagnosed with scabies
- higher than usual number of people with respiratory symptoms

These definitions should not be taken as a threshold for reporting or action. Please follow the guidance above for when to seek help or report infections.

Key schools documentation

- [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) health protection in education and childcare settings](#)
- [DfE emergency planning and response](#)
- [DfE good estate management for schools](#)
- [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19](#)
- [living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)
- [ventilation of indoor spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](#)
- [Reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace GOV.UK](#)

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