



Eastlea winter viruses and infections update 5/12/22



Dear Parents / Carers,

It seems a long time since I have had to share a 'health' update, but as many of you will be aware we have had more than our fair share of 'winter' illnesses in recent weeks including vomiting and diarrhoea, hand foot and mouth, tonsillitis, high temperatures, coughs, colds and 'flu symptoms.

Over the last day or two we have been informed that a small number of children have been diagnosed with Strep A bacterial throat infections and that one pupil in Nursery has a confirmed case of scarlet fever. In the light of the recent media coverage around Strep A infections, I have today taken advice from both a GP at the Brockwell Medical Centre and also the Health Protection Agency.

It has been reassuring to find that all of the guidance recommended to combat the wide range of infections which are doing the rounds is already being followed by Eastlea:

- **Pupils and staff who are unwell should not come to school.** *Those affected by respiratory illnesses should stay off school until they have recovered. Those affected by scarlet fever should be excluded from school until 24 hours after their first dose of antibiotics. Those affected by diarrhoea or vomiting should stay off school until at least 48 hours after they last had diarrhoea or vomiting.*
- **Encouraging good hand hygiene.** *Handwashing is a highly effective way of preventing many infections from spreading. Pupils and staff are asked to frequently wash their hands particularly after using the toilet, after using a tissue to catch a cough or sneeze, and before eating. Hand sanitisers are also used on entry to the building in the morning and after break/lunchtimes.*
- **Cleaning the environment.** *Tables are wiped regularly in the classrooms and we have reinstated the systems we had in place during Covid of ensuring that there is twice-daily cleaning of frequently touched areas e.g. door handles, hand rails, light switches, toilet flushes etc.*

We have also been asked to share an information leaflet for pupils, parents and staff which has general advice for how to deal with winter illnesses in northeast schools, plus a fact sheet of frequently asked questions about scarlet fever – see the attachments.

In the meantime we ask for your continued support and vigilance in helping us to keep the Eastlea community safe by being alert for symptoms of illness, keeping your child at home if they are unwell, informing school of the reasons for absence and not attending school events yourselves if you have any signs of respiratory or other infections.

Thank you!

Miss E Beeston, Head Teacher