

# Gastroenteritis outbreak pack for schools and other childcare settings

The following guidance aims to help you manage an outbreak of gastroenteritis in a school or nursery environment. The principles are effective at limiting the spread of viral and bacterial infections, including norovirus. It has been produced with reference to PHE's national guidance, entitled 'Health Protection in schools and other childcare facilities' and can be found - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>.

The guidance consists of the following sections:

1. Summary  
General principles for effective control of gastroenteritis
2. Action Card 1  
Key actions for the Head Teacher or Administrator to manage the outbreak.
3. Action Card 2  
Key actions for caretakers and staff who will be undertaking cleaning, which is a vital step to reduce the spread of infection.
4. Action Card 3  
Information to be provided to the Health Protection Team to help them give appropriate advice to manage the outbreak.
5. Action Card 4  
Contact information for organisations that can provide help during an outbreak.
6. Links to the chapters of PHE national guidance - Health Protection in schools and other childcare facilities.

## Summary for Norovirus Outbreaks

<b>Transmission Route:</b>	Person to person by the faecal oral route, from aerosols of projectile vomit and from environmental contamination.
<b>Incubation Period:</b>	12 to 48 hours (length of time from acquiring the infection to developing symptoms)
<b>Exclusion:</b>	48 hours after their last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting

### Recommendations for action

Hand Hygiene:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should be supervised and encouraged to wash their hands before eating and drinking and after going to the toilet</li> <li>• Hand washing with liquid soap and warm water.</li> <li>• Paper towels should be used for drying hands and a waste paper bin provided for disposal.</li> <li>• Alcohol gel is not effective against norovirus, but it can be used in addition to soap and water</li> <li>• Everyone should wash their hands on arrival at school and before leaving</li> <li>• Sand, play dough and water play activities should be suspended for the duration of the outbreak.</li> </ul>
Cleaning and disinfection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the school surfaces are thoroughly cleaned daily using warm water and detergent.</li> <li>• All eating surfaces and toilet areas should be disinfected after cleaning twice daily using a hypochlorite solution 1,000 parts per million (such as Milton Solution)</li> <li>• It is recommended that toilets are cleaned at least twice a day and their condition monitored during the day, with a view to an extra clean if required.</li> <li>• Always wear disposable apron and gloves when cleaning.</li> <li>• The areas that should be cleaned and then disinfected should include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All areas of the toilet including rims, seats and handles</li> <li>➤ Wash basins and taps</li> <li>➤ Door handles and light switches</li> <li>➤ All frequently touched equipment</li> <li>➤ Frequently handled items such as telephones and computer keyboards</li> <li>➤ Carpeted areas and soft furnishings should be cleaned as normal, preferably with a carpet shampoo rather than a vacuum cleaner (hypochlorite will bleach carpets and soft furnishings)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Public spillage incident:	<p>When spillages of vomit or diarrhoea occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cover the excreta/vomit spillages immediately with disposable paper towels.</li> <li>• Always wear a disposable apron and gloves when disposing of faeces/vomit. A face mask should be worn if there is a concern about splash contamination to the face.</li> <li>• After removing the spillage, clean the surrounding area with warm soapy water, followed by disinfection with a hypochlorite solution of 1000 parts per million. Always clean a wider area than is visibly contaminated.</li> <li>• Carpets contaminated with faeces or vomit should be cleaned with warm soapy water (or a carpet shampoo) after removal of the spillage with paper towels. This should be followed by steam cleaning if possible.</li> <li>• The area where the incident has occurred should be cleared and ventilated as soon as possible</li> </ul>
Food Safety:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone should eat and drink in designated areas (i.e. dining hall or staff room).</li> <li>• Open boxes of chocolates/biscuits and fruit bowls must be removed in an outbreak as they can easily become contaminated.</li> <li>• Food handlers should avoid contact with children during an outbreak, in order to avoid contamination of the kitchen or food.</li> <li>• Kitchens MUST have their own separate cleaning equipment.</li> </ul>

**Further Information** can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

# Action Card 1

<b>Title</b>	Managing an outbreak of diarrhoea & vomiting in a childcare setting
<b>Description</b>	Overview of what to do in an outbreak situation
<b>Who</b>	Those members of staff that are responsible for overseeing/managing an outbreak i.e. Head Teacher, administrative staff, absence monitoring manager etc.

## **Definition of an outbreak – An increase in the number of sickness absences (above the normal rate) due to diarrhoea and/or vomiting.**

### **What do you need to do:**

- Ensure good record keeping – names, dates of birth, symptoms, dates of onset of illness, episodes of public vomiting etc. in the school.
- Inform Public Health England (PHE) for advice & guidance (see Action Card 3)
- Prompt exclusion / isolation of affected children and staff, ensuring strict compliance with 48 hour exclusion (i.e. fully recovered for 48 hours before returning to school)
- In addition, it is recommended that new pupils are delayed from starting at school until 48 hours after the resolution of symptoms in the school.
- Consideration should be given to advising parents and visitors about the outbreak.
- Remind children about the importance of good hand hygiene.
- Cookery activities for the children as well as sand, playdough and water play activities should be suspended for the duration of the outbreak. All potentially contaminated materials should be discarded and replaced in accordance with your local procedure.
- Ensure robust infection control measures are in place:
  - Cleaning regime in place (see Action Card 2)
  - Guidance for the management of 'Spillages of vomit or diarrhoea' are followed (see Action Card 2)
  - Effective hand hygiene (see Summary Sheet)
  - Plentiful supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), liquid soap, paper towels, etc.
  - Individuals who have had diarrhoea should be excluded from swimming until at least 48 hours after symptoms have settled.
  - Non-essential visitors should be restricted and/or discouraged from visiting during the outbreak.
  - Dispose of all infection-exposed food items from communal areas i.e. boxes of chocolates, biscuits or bowls of fruit.
- Declare the outbreak over when there has been 48 hours since the resolution of symptoms in the last known case.
- Terminal clean to be performed as soon as possible after the resolution of the outbreak.

**Further Information** can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

# Action Card 2

<b>Title</b>	Cleaning & disinfection of the school/nursery environment
<b>Description</b>	Germs that cause diarrhoea & vomiting will survive in the environment, so to stop the infection spreading it is important that the areas are maintained in a clean condition. Decontamination (cleaning and disinfecting) the areas thoroughly on a frequent basis is necessary.
<b>Who</b>	Caretakers, other staff with responsibility for cleaning

The following are terms that you may hear:

<b><u>Detergent:</u></b> A cleaning agent that helps to remove dirt and grease from surfaces	<b><u>Disinfectant:</u></b> A chemical that destroys bacteria. <b><u>Recommended Disinfectant:</u></b> Chlorine - releasing agent/hypochlorite solution (e.g. bleach or 'Milton' solution 0.1% at 1000ppm)
<b><u>Routine cleaning:</u></b> A process that physically removes contamination which is done on a regular/daily basis. Warm water and detergent should be used to clean.	<b><u>Disinfection:</u></b> A process that reduces the number of germs to a level at which they are not harmful, but it is only effective if the surfaces and equipment are cleaned thoroughly with detergent and water beforehand.
<b><u>Enhanced cleaning:</u></b> During an outbreak cleaning and disinfection should be done twice-daily as a minimum (plus as necessary). Particular attention should be given to frequently-touched surfaces, e.g. door handles, flushes, taps, contact points, switches, mirrors, bins, furniture, stair rails, etc.	<b><u>Deep cleaning:</u></b> Intense and enhanced thorough cleaning process. Usually planned ahead e.g. during holiday periods.
<b><u>Terminal cleaning:</u></b> Cleaning that takes place at the end of an outbreak to ensure the area has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. This included the steam cleaning of carpets and soft furnishings.	

To clean effectively you will need:

## **Equipment**

Clean, disposable, single-use cloths, dedicated mop & mop bucket (different coloured equipment for different areas is a useful tool), dust pan and brush, clinical waste bags (yellow), spillage kit, paper towels, Personal protective equipment (PPE), steam cleaner.  
Cleaning equipment used by the kitchen staff **must** be kept separate.

## **Chemicals**

Detergent (see above)

Disinfectant (see above)

Sanitiser – this is a commercial purchased combination of a detergent with disinfectant properties.

***You must always ensure that you follow your health and safety guidelines when handling chemicals including the use of appropriate PPE***

- During an outbreak cleaning and disinfection should be done twice-daily.
- Warm water and detergent should be used to clean hard surfaces followed by disinfection with a 0.1% hypochlorite solution. Bleach or Milton are the recommended disinfectants (at 1000ppm), as they will kill both bacteria and viruses. If these are unsuitable, a disinfectant that has **both** antibacterial and antiviral properties **must** be used.
- Particular attention should be paid to cleaning and disinfecting toilet seats, toilet flush handles, door handles, washbasin taps, push-plates on doors, light switches, stair handrails and other frequently touched areas.
- Spillages of vomit or diarrhoea should be cordoned off and the area cleared immediately:
  - Wear disposable gloves and apron.
  - Use a spill kit or paper towels to soak up the spillage. Transfer these and any solid matter directly into a clinical waste bag.
  - Clean the soiled area with detergent and hot water, using a disposable cloth. A two metre area around the spillage should be cleaned.
  - The same area should then be disinfected with the freshly made hypochlorite solution.
  - Dispose of gloves, apron and cloths into the clinical waste bag.
- Wash hands thoroughly using soap and water and dry them. Alcohol hand-rub is not a substitute for hand washing after cleaning up a spillage.
- Vacuum cleaning carpets and floor buffing are not recommended during an outbreak.
- Do-not use bleach on carpets or soft furnishings - a steam cleaner must be used to remove the bacterial or virus particles.
- Clothing contaminated with body fluids should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and taken home by the child/parent. Do not wash/sluice or soak the contaminated items on behalf of the child/parent.
- Carpets and soft furnishings should be steam-cleaned, or a carpet shampoo used.

**Further Information** can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

## Action Card 3

<b>Title</b>	Reporting an outbreak of D&V to Public Health England (PHE) by telephone.
<b>Description</b>	This card gives you the contact number for PHE and details of the information that PHE will require to help you manage your outbreak.
<b>Who</b>	Those members of staff that are responsible for informing PHE of an outbreak i.e. head teacher, administrative staff.

**When to report:** An increase in the number of sickness absences (above the normal rate) due to diarrhoea and/or vomiting

**Phone:** 0344 2253861, option 2 (Hants & Isle of Wight), then option 1 (Health Protection)

### What PHE will ask for:

- Name and address of the school, including the postcode
- Contact person's name and phone number
- Total number of children at the school,
- Details of the year groups / classes
- Number of staff at the school
- Number of children affected, which year groups, details of siblings affected
- Number of staff affected
- Date of first illness (onset date)
- Details of any recent school trips, special events
- Details of any episodes of public vomiting
- Details of school caterers affected
- School lunch / packed lunch ratio
- School layout and facilities, particularly who shares toilets

**Further Information** can be found in the guidance: Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

# Action Card 4

**Title** Contacts and further information

**Description** This card provides details of the main contacts who can help you during an outbreak.

**Who** Those members of staff that are responsible for informing PHE of an outbreak, i.e. administrative staff, head teacher

## **PHE – South East Centre – HLOW Office**

0344 225 3861, option 2, option 1

### **Education Departments**

Hampshire County Council	0845 603 5638	Southampton City Council	023 8083 3000
Portsmouth City Council	023 9283 4092	IOW Council	01983 821000

### **School Nursing Teams**

Portsmouth School Nursing Service	023 92684545	Southampton School Health Nurses	0300 123 6661
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Hampshire School Nursing Team -

<http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/services/childrens-services/school-nursing/>

Isle of Wight School Nursing Team -

<http://www.iow.nhs.uk/our-services/health-visiting-school-nursing/0-19-years-service>

### **Environmental Health Departments**

Basingstoke & Deane BC	01256 844844	East Hampshire District Council	01730 234306
Eastleigh Borough Council	02380 688329	Fareham Borough Council	01329 236100
Gosport Borough Council	02392 584242	Hart District Council	01252 622122
Havant Borough Council	02392 446654	Isle of Wight Council	01983 823000
New Forest District Council	02380 285230	Portsmouth City Council	02392 688366
Rushmoor Borough Council	01252 398177	Southampton City Council	02380 832519
Test Valley Borough Council	01264 368000	Winchester City Council	01962 848186

## Public Health England South East

### Gastrointestinal Pack for Schools and Nurseries

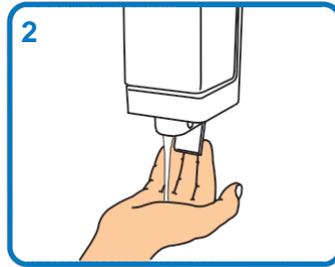
PHE have developed guidance for schools and nurseries which is available on the GOV UK website. It is entitled 'Health protection in schools and other childcare facilities'. The following are links to the individual chapters for ease of reading.

1.	<b>Infections in Childcare Settings</b>	<a href="#">Infections</a>
2.	<b>Prevention and Control</b>	<a href="#">Prevention and control</a>
3.	<b>Guidance For Hand Washing</b>	<a href="#">Hand washing guidance</a>
4.	<b>What to do if you suspect an outbreak of infection</b>	<a href="#">Suspecting an Outbreak</a>
5.	<b>Cleaning the environment</b>	<a href="#">Cleaning</a>
6.	<b>Staff Health</b>	<a href="#">Staff health</a>
7.	<b>Exclusion Table</b>	<a href="#">Exclusion table</a>
8.	<b>Diarrhoea and Vomiting Action Checklist</b>	<a href="#">D&amp;V checklist</a>
9.	<b>National Documents</b> Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities  Winter Readiness Information for South East Schools and Nurseries	<a href="#">Health protection in schools and other childcare facilities - GOV.UK</a>  <b>This document is sent out annually in the Autumn and can be obtained from the Local Authority Public Health Team or the Health Protection Team.</b>

# Hand-washing technique with soap and water



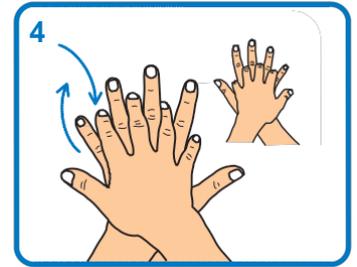
Wet hands with water



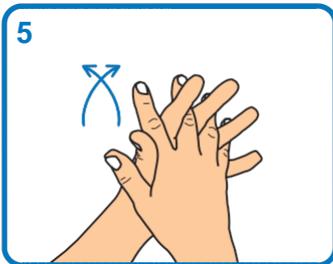
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces



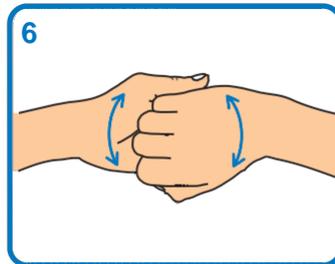
Rub hands palm to palm



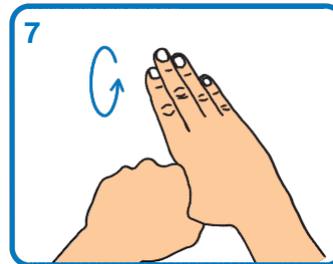
Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand with fingers interlaced



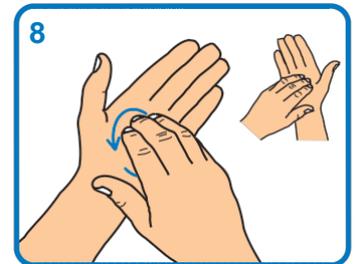
Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



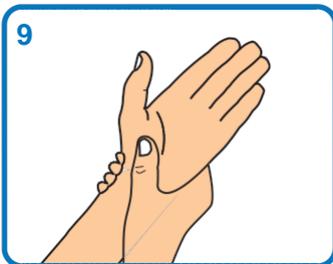
Rub with back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using a rotational movement



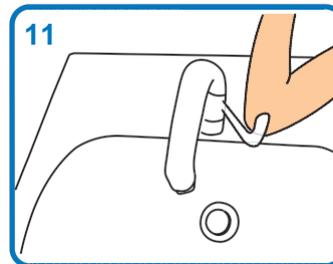
Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion



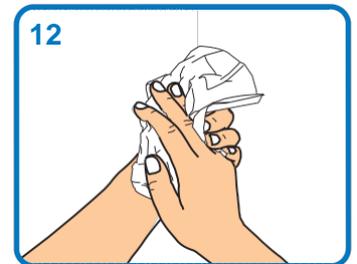
Rub each wrist with opposite hand



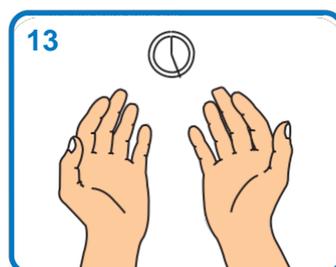
Rinse hands with water



Use elbow to turn off tap



Dry thoroughly with a single-use towel



Hand washing should take 15–30 seconds