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Winter Flu and Public Health Advice

Dear Parents and Carers,

As per the norm for this time of year, we have been working with our children to remind them of the basic things they can do to keep themselves healthy and well during the winter period.

We have talked about the importance of handwashing, catching our sneezes in tissues and even the best way to cough to avoid any winter germs spreading unnecessarily.

The timing of our advice coincides with Public Health England advising schools of their response to the Novel Coronavirus which has featured heavily in the news recently. Their current message to schools is that we should carry on as normal and that there is no need to take any measures that we wouldn't do as with any other seasonal flu period.

If a child is unwell with flu-like symptoms families should employ the usual strategies such as bed rest, plenty of fluids and medication to alleviate temperatures. The advice we have been given from Public Health England is that parents and carers who are concerned should contact NHS 111 for advice.

In school we are maintaining our cleaning routines that make sure that "hotspots" are thoroughly cleaned and we do our best to minimise the risk of the spread of colds or flu.

The NHS and Public Health England have asked schools to relay the following information:

What is the coronavirus?

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus has been spreading since it was first reported in December 2019.

Symptoms include fever and respiratory symptoms including coughing and shortness of breath. Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

If you develop these symptoms and have recently travelled to an area where the coronavirus is being widely reported or believe you may have come in contact with the virus then you should stay indoors and call NHS 111 informing them of the details linking you to the virus.

A case of coronavirus has been confirmed in Brighton & Hove?

One individual from Brighton & Hove tested positive on Thursday 6 February and is in a London hospital where they are being well cared for.

The new case is a known contact of a previously confirmed UK case, and the virus was passed on in France. Where this person lives has not been confirmed by the Chief Medical Officer.

Public Health England is the lead organisation responding to the situation. Public Health England is working with partner organisations to take measures to prevent any possible further spread of the virus.

Anyone who may have been in contact with the virus is currently being identified and will be contacted directly by Public Health England.



What should I do?

If you do feel unwell having travelled to the UK from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days, then you should stay indoors and call NHS 111, even if symptoms are mild.

If you have travelled from Wuhan or Hubei province in the last 14 days then you should stay indoors and avoid contact with others as you would with flu, and call NHS 111 informing them of your symptoms and of your recent travel to the city.

Everyone is being reminded to follow Public Health England advice to:

- Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitiser gel.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport. Use a sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

You can find the latest information and advice from Public Health England at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

If you are feeling unwell and have not been contacted by Public Health England, then there is no need for concern.

You should continue to treat your symptoms as usual for seasonal flu or a common cold. If you feel unwell and do not know what you should do, then call NHS 111.

Where can I find more information?

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

Blog and frequently asked questions:

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

Travel advice for those travelling and living overseas:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or a member of the schools leadership team – I would remind you though that we are not medical professionals and our response would normally be the same: Parents and Carers are best placed to know when or if their child is well enough to attend school.

We will of course continue to keep parents informed with any updates as and when we receive them.

Yours sincerely,

Mr King