

Email: louise.smith@norfolk.gov.uk

08 November 2019

Dear Headteacher,

Preventing infectious diseases in schools

I hope you are having an excellent term. As winter approaches, I want to make sure you have everything you need regarding Infection Prevention and Control at your school. I know how vigilant you are regarding this matter, but hopefully the information below is helpful.

As you will know, schools offer the perfect breeding ground for many common winter infections. These infections then spread rapidly, causing disruption to pupils, staff and parents. Good infection control in the community is important in minimising the number of people who suffer from infections.

There are some simple actions that you can take to minimise this disruption and help keep your pupils and staff healthy.

If you are not already aware, Public Health England (PHE) has a programme called [e-bug](#). This provides a wealth of free resources linked to the national curriculum which can be used to support education on micro-organisms, the spread, prevention and treatment of infection.

I would also like to draw your attention to [Public Health England's \(PHE\) advice and resources](#) on controlling the spread of infections in the school environment. This gives practical advice on how to prevent and respond to cases of common infectious diseases. There are key things you can do as a headteacher:

- Encouraging regular handwashing with soap and water which is the most effective way to reduce spread of infection.
- Good hand hygiene practices depend on adequate facilities. Access to a hand wash basin with warm running water along with a wall mounted cartridge based soap dispenser, paper towels in a wall dispenser and a foot operated bin.

- Follow the guidelines on [exclusion on medical grounds](#) . Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection in childhood settings.
- Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Children and adults should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue and wash hands after using or disposing of tissues in a foot operated bin.

Your local East of England Health Protection Team are always willing to give tailored advice and support to schools who suspect they may have an outbreak (i.e. 2 or more cases of the same infection or illness). Please do call upon them as needed. They can be contacted at eastofenglandHPT@phe.gov.uk or by phone on 0300 303 8537.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Louise Smith', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dr S.J Louise Smith, MB, ChB,PHD, FFPH

Director of Public Health