Monday 20th May 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know we have recently had a sickness bug sweep through the school in the last couple of weeks, partly due to the 48 hours not being followed.

On Friday, we contacted Public Health England (PHE), who advised us that our current levels of sickness constitute an outbreak of gastroenteritis and that we must work together with parents to bring it back under control. While I do not wish to alarm families about the severity of this situation, I am aware that some children have come back to school before they were fully clear of the virus.

PHE have provided us with the following advice for parents:

If your child is unwell:

- Make sure they get lots of rest.
- Offer plenty of fluids, in small sips if necessary, to stop them becoming dehydrated
- You can use infant Paracetamol or Ibuprofen, to help keep their temperature down, but follow the instructions on the packet.
- Please ring the school and let us know that your child is ill and what symptoms they have
- If your child is unusually sleepy, won’t take fluids or has other symptoms, such as blood in their diarrhoea, or you are worried about them, please get medical advice promptly

If your child has been suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting keep them at home until they have been well for 48 hours. If they had diarrhoea, they should not return to school until 48 hours after the first normal stool. This is to stop the spread of infection to others.

To help prevent the spread of diarrhoea and vomiting:

Hand washing is one of the most important ways to prevent spread of infection. This applies to the child who is ill and anyone looking after them.

Wash hands using liquid soap if possible:

- Before and after caring for your child.
- After using the toilet.
- Before eating or handling food.
- After cleaning up vomit, faeces or urine.

Other ways of preventing the spread of infection:

- Keep a separate towel for family members who have symptoms.
- Clean baths and washbasins thoroughly and disinfect after use.
• If cleaning up diarrhoea or vomit, wash the surface with hot soapy water and disinfect before allowing to dry.
• Wash soiled clothing, bed linen and towels separately at a high temperature.

Please keep your child away from other children and people that are particularly vulnerable, e.g. the elderly and those with chronic illnesses.

I really cannot emphasise enough the importance of keeping your child away from school for the allotted **48 hours, after they have finished being sick or having diarrhoea.** In addition to containing the virus, this will enable us to ensure that our deep cleaning measures within the school building, as recommended by PHE, are effective.

A member of our community, and parent of a child here at Dormansland, is about to undergo life-saving treatment next week and over the coming months. In addition to this, we have other families in our school community who have members with weakened immune systems, and any exposure to this virus will compromise their on-going recovery.

Please can we all be extra vigilant over the coming weeks and months about sending children to school with any symptoms or signs of a fever / temperature / severe cough & cold / bugs etc. If contagious it might be that another child becomes very unwell after catching it and passes it on to their parent/s. To you and I, this might mean an extra day for your child to stay home (and an extra day off work to care for them) but for some of our parents, it could mean having to cancel the life-saving treatment they so desperately need.

We also want to make sure that this child spends as much time with their parent as possible and last week they were unfortunately unable to visit the hospital as they had been exposed to the sickness bug.

Thank you, in advance, for your support and co-operation with this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Stokes