

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

Dear parent/guardian/staff member,

### **Re: Recent illness in school**

The North-East Health Protection Team have been made aware that a number of children attending Bournmoor Primary School have reported recent illness with respiratory like symptoms and fever. Viruses including influenza (flu) are a common cause of illness at this time of year in the community and in schools.

The purpose of this letter is to provide with some further information and advice about these illnesses.

### **Influenza (flu)**

Flu and flu-like viruses such as COVID spread easily between people from coughs and sneezes. They can live on hands and surfaces for up to 24 hours. Symptoms may develop quickly and can include:

- Sudden fever
- Dry, chesty cough
- Sore throat
- Aching body
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Diarrhoea or tummy pain
- Nausea

For most healthy people flu is an unpleasant but self-limiting illness. However, some people can be more at risk of developing severe illness or complications including the following groups:

- those aged 65 years or over
- pregnant women
- those with a long-term medical condition – for example, diabetes or a heart, lung, kidney or neurological disease
- those with a weakened immune system – for example, because of chemotherapy or HIV
- those resident in long term care facilities

If you or your child are in an at-risk group AND develop symptoms of flu, please seek prompt medical assessment by a GP, nurse or via NHS 111 who will be able to provide further advice.

The flu vaccine is the best form of protection we have. It reduces the risk of catching flu and spreading it to others and is available every flu season for at-risk groups, children aged 2-3 years and all primary school children. Further information can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

If you or your child are in an at-risk group AND have not had the seasonal flu jab AND are concerned that you or your child have had contact with someone with flu, please seek prompt medical assessment by a GP, nurse or via NHS 111.

If you or your child are not in an at-risk group but develop flu like illness and are concerned about your symptoms, please consult your GP or NHS 111 in the normal way.

Staff members and pupils should not attend school if they are unwell with symptoms of flu/ flu-like illness and have a high temperature. They can go back to school and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and are well enough to attend.

For more information about any of the above please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/> or [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19)

## **General hygiene**

The spread of most infectious illnesses is reduced through good hand hygiene. Please ensure that you and your child wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap, particularly after using the toilet, after using a tissue to catch a cough or sneeze, and before eating.

If you are concerned about any of the information in this letter or would like to discuss it further, please contact my team on 0300 303 8596 (option 0).

Yours sincerely

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Consultant in Public Health