



26<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dear Parents/ Guardians

The Health Protection Team has been made aware that a number of pupils and teaching staff at A Norwich primary school have been suffering with gastroenteritis symptoms suggestive of Norovirus infection. This letter is to give further advice and information about this and what you can do to reduce the spread of this infection.

### **What is viral gastroenteritis?**

Every year lots of children, in schools and nurseries, suffer from diarrhoea and vomiting. This is termed gastroenteritis and is normally caused by a virus. The most common virus is known by several different names: Winter vomiting disease or Norovirus.

### **What are the symptoms of viral gastroenteritis?**

Symptoms will vary, but usually include either:

- Vomiting (often sudden in onset) or diarrhoea or both
- Tiredness
- Fever
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Aching muscles
- Stomach pain
- Headache

Symptoms begin one to two days after a person becomes infected. The illness usually lasts between one and three days.

### **How can viral gastroenteritis be prevented?**

Good standards of personal hygiene are essential in preventing the spread of viral gastroenteritis:

- Hands must be washed with soap and water and dried thoroughly after using the toilet or changing nappies
- Children are likely to need supervision to ensure their hands are properly washed and dried
- Hands must be washed and dried thoroughly before handling food

- Separate towels should be used and these should be changed and washed frequently

**How long should someone with viral gastroenteritis stay off work, school or nursery?**

- Children attending a school, nursery, playgroup or childminder should stay off until they have been **free of symptoms for 48 hours** and are well enough to return
- Adults working in a school, nursery playgroup or childminder should stay off until they have been **free of symptoms for 48 hours** and feel well enough to return to work

Always talk to your GP if you are worried about yourself or your child.

If there is a large number of children and staff with viral gastroenteritis then the local Health Protection Team and Environmental Health Officers may need to investigate and offer advice to you and the school / nursery.

Yours sincerely

Dr Hamid Mahgoub  
Consultant in Communicable Disease Control  
East of England Health Protection Team