

EDUCATION, LEISURE & HOUSING

Corporate Director: James Wylie
Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY

Tel: (01856) 873535
Fax: (01856) 876327

Website: www.orkney.gov.uk
Email: education.leisure@orkney.gov.uk



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Dear Parents/Carers

NHS Orkney winter illness advice

This winter we are all enjoying being back to socialising with family and friends without any Covid restrictions. However, this means we will be more susceptible to winter illnesses which have been far less common in the past two years.

Good hygiene practice such as hand washing with liquid soap remains the most important step in preventing and controlling spread of infection.

Children and adults should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and then wash their hands with soap and water after using or disposing of tissues.

Winter illnesses we are seeing include cold and flu, norovirus and some cases of Strep A.

Viral infections such as cold and flu are very common in babies and children, and most will make a full recovery without requiring treatment. Please check NHS Inform [If your child has cold or flu symptoms | NHS inform](#) to find a list of things that you can do to help at home.

If your child is yet to be vaccinated against Flu (and/or Covid), you can make an appointment by calling the Kirkwall Vaccination Centre on 0300 303 5313. Norovirus can be very unpleasant, causing diarrhoea and vomiting, it is most common in winter but can appear at any time of year. Norovirus can usually be dealt with at home, however more advice can be found here [Norovirus | NHS inform](#).

This year we have seen higher than usual numbers of Strep A infections in Scotland and scarlet fever (a common presentation of this infection) among children. Scarlet fever can cause the following symptoms: headache, sore throat, high temperature and raised pink/purple spots that join up to produce a skin rash, which feels like sandpaper to the touch. The scarlet rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present. Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, in very rare occasions the bacteria can enter the bloodstream and cause a more serious invasive illness.

Trusted health advice on scarlet fever can be found on [NHS Inform](#). If you suspect your child has scarlet fever please contact your GP or if out of hours 111. Although the illness usually clears up after about a week, your GP will be able to confirm diagnosis and recommend appropriate treatment.

If your child is unwell and you are concerned, please react as you normally would - you know your child best and, while many children recover fully from winter bugs without the need for medication, it may be that a short course of treatment is the appropriate action. While it can be alarming when your child becomes unwell, each of these illnesses are ones that we would usually expect to see over a winter season.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Diamond', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Diamond
Head of Education