

Dear Parents

### **Winter vomiting bug and mumps**

No doubt you will have read in the press about the **winter vomiting bug**, norovirus. We have received the following advice from the Health Protection Agency regarding simple precautions that should be borne in mind if we are to avoid an outbreak at Arnold.

The winter vomiting disease is caused by infection with the small round structured virus (SRSV) also known as the Norwalklike virus or norovirus. SRSV lives in the gut and is passed from person to person by poor hygiene, particularly when hands are not washed properly after using the toilet. It can also be spread when someone vomits and by droplet transmission when coughing and sneezing spreads the virus through the air.

#### *The symptoms*

Only very small amounts of the virus are needed to cause illness and consequently are easily spread in closed communities such as schools. The incubation period is usually between 24 and 48 hours. This is followed by severe and sudden vomiting and/or diarrhoea and fever symptoms, which last about 48 hours.

#### *Precautions*

If your child develops any of these symptoms, please keep them at home, both for the duration of the illness and for at least 48 hours after their symptoms have ceased.

Strict personal hygiene (for example thorough hand washing) is vital in order to reduce the risk of spreading this unpleasant disease. Unfortunately, there is no specific treatment apart from letting the illness run its course, but it is obviously advisable to drink plenty of fluids in order to prevent dehydration.

We would like to inform you that the school has been informed of a few cases of **mumps** within the school community in recent days.

Advice from the Health Protection Agency is that mumps is an infection caused by a virus (germ). Its symptoms include fever, headaches, swelling and tenderness in one or both sides of the neck. Young children may also have a runny nose and eyes, sore throat and ears. The illness is usually self-limiting and the child normally recovers after a short time. Occasionally, more serious complications of mumps can occur.

Mumps is caught by being in close contact with somebody who already has the infection. The virus is passed in the secretions of the infected person's nose and throat, and is spread by their sneezing and coughing, or being in direct contact with articles contaminated by the saliva, e.g. a tissue.

There is no specific treatment for mumps but an appropriate medicine to help bring down the temperature may be used (do not use aspirin in children under 16) and if necessary, sponging with tepid water.

The best way to protect your child against mumps is to ensure your child has received two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine). If you are unsure as to whether your child is fully vaccinated or if you would like to arrange for your child to receive the vaccination, please contact your General Practitioner.

As a precaution, if you suspect your child has mumps, you should keep the child off school for at least five days after symptoms first develop to prevent further spread of the infection.

Further information about mumps can be obtained from NHS Direct [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk).

If you have any other queries about **mumps** or the **winter vomiting bug**, please do not hesitate to contact Matron on 01253 346391.

Yours sincerely

Jim Keefe  
Vice Principal