

Norfolk Health Protection Unit (now Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Health Protection Unit) working with the Norfolk Public Health Network

**Guidance for Schools
on
Communicable Disease Matters**

Last updated December 2008

Queries or suggestions relating to this guidance document should be addressed to:-

Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Health Protection Unit, Thetford Community Healthy Living Centre,
Croxtan Road, Thetford IP24 1JD; Tel. 01842 767757; Fax 01842 767787.

Communicable Disease – Guidance for Schools

DISEASE	INCUBATION PERIOD	INFECTIOUS PERIOD	RESTRICTIONS/ EXCLUSIONS	SCHOOL CONTACTS	NOTES
Athletes foot	Unknown	Infectious while lesions are present. Fungal spores are spread by direct contact or via contaminated floors, showers etc.	None	No Action	Dry between toes after bathing. Apply fungicidal dusting powder to feet
Chicken pox	2-3 weeks	Infectious up to 5 days before and not more than 5 days after appearance of spots	Exclusion for at least 5 days after spots first appear or until spots become dry	Pregnant women should be made aware so that they can consult their doctor for advice if they are not immune	Infection confers long immunity. Second attacks are rare. For 'shingles' consult CCDC**
Cold sores	2-12 days	Virus can be present up to 7 weeks after recovery from lip lesion, usually spread by direct contact or saliva	None	No Action	Good personal hygiene can minimise transfer of infectious material
Conjunctivitis "Pink eye"	Varies according to cause	Can be infectious while eye is inflamed. Spread by contact, sharing flannels etc.	Exclusion not usually necessary after medical treatment and/or advice	No Action	Good personal hygiene can minimise transfer of infectious material
Gastroenteritis (Diarrhoea &/or vomiting)	Varies according to cause	Multiple linked cases should be reported at the earliest opportunity to the local environmental health department. * An outbreak is defined as 'two or more apparently linked cases occurring at around the same time'. All people with gastroenteritis should be excluded until 48 hours after they are symptom free.			
Glandular fever	4-6 weeks	The virus may be carried by the affected person for a year or more after the illness. Transmission is via saliva, usually kissing	Exclusion until clinically well	No action	
Hand foot & mouth	3-5 days	Particularly infectious during period of acute illness but sometimes longer	Exclusion until clinically well	No Action	Good lavatory hygiene important for 2 months after illness
Headlice	Headlice can only move from one head to another during prolonged head to head contact (at least 1 minute)		Refer to local policy and leaflet "A public information leaflet about headlice"		It is advisable that all affected members of a child's family are treated

NHPU Guidance for Schools on Communicable Disease Matters

DISEASE	INCUBATION PERIOD	I N F E C T I O U S PERIOD	RESTRICTIONS/ EXCLUSIONS	S C H O O L CONTACTS	NOTES
Hepatitis A "Yellow Jaundice"	15-50 days	The virus is spread from the faeces of an affected person to the mouth of another. The infectious period is during the last half of the incubation period and for up to a week after jaundice appears	Exclusion until 1 week after jaundice appears plus clinically well	Advice should be sought from CCDC** at an early stage	The best control measure is scrupulous hand washing after lavatory and regular cleaning of WC's etc.
Influenza	1-5 days	Infectious up to one week after onset	Exclusion until well	No Action	Immunisation available for certain vulnerable groups eg. Asthma, diabetes, heart or kidney disease
Impetigo	4-10 days	Infectious usually until lesions healed. The bacteria are usually spread by pus on fingers	Exclusion for 48 hours after treatment commenced unless lesions can be covered	No Action	Medical treatment, covering lesion and personal hygiene are important
Measles	7-18 days	Infectious from just before illness starts until 4 days after appearance of rash	Exclusion until well	No Action (Most children immunised)	Unimmunised persons can usually be vaccinated successfully if within 3 days of contact
Meningitis & Meningococcal Disease	Varied according to cause	Advice should be sought at an early stage from the CCDC**			
Mumps	12-25 days	Infectious from 2 days before to 4 days after onset of facial swelling	Exclusion until swelling has subsided	No Action	
Ringworm	10-14 days	Infectious until lesions healed. Spread by direct contact skin to skin or indirect contact via combs, clothing etc.	Exclusion not necessary after treatment has started.	No Action	Pets and farm animals may be a source of infection
Rubella "German Measles"	14-23 days	Infectious for about 1 week before and at least 4 days after onset of rash	Exclusion for 7 days after onset of rash	Pregnant women should be made aware so that they can consult their doctor for advice if they are not immune	
DISEASE	INCUBATION PERIOD	I N F E C T I O U S PERIOD	RESTRICTIONS/ EXCLUSIONS	S C H O O L CONTACTS	NOTES

NHPU Guidance for Schools on Communicable Disease Matters

Scabies	2-6 weeks (1-4 days if previously infected)	Infectious until treated. Mites are transferred during skin-to skin contact and via recently infected under clothes or bed linen	Exclusion until the day after treatment	Household members and those who have had prolonged skin-to-skin contact should have simultaneous treatment	The mites make tiny burrows in the skin which itch intensely especially at night. Sites include between fingers, wrists elbows etc.
Scarlet fever Scarlatina	1-3 days	Usually spread by direct contact. Infectious until treated with appropriate antibiotic for 48 hours	Exclusion until 48 hours after treatment	No Action	
Slapped face disease "Fifth disease"	4-20 days	Infectious before onset of rash but probably not after rash appears	Exclusion until clinically well	This virus may unusually cause damage to the foetus in pregnancy. Advice should be sought from G.P.	Rash has a "slapped face" appearance on cheeks followed a day or so later by a face like rash on body
Threadworms	Few days	Infectious until treatment. Eggs can be transferred to mouth on fingers if the anus is scratched	None	Contacts and family members should be treated simultaneously	Good hygiene and adequate treatment are essential
Verrucae and warts	2-3 months	Infectious while visible lesions persist	None. Verruca socks may be worn for swimming	No Action	Usually disappear spontaneously. If pain on walking medical advice can be sought
Whooping Cough	7-10 days	Infectious from onset until about 3 weeks later. (Or 5 days if treated with appropriate antibiotic)	Exclusion for 3 weeks from onset. If treated with antibiotic can return when clinically well	Unimmunised household contacts under 7 years should be excluded until on antibiotic treatment	During an outbreak children under 5 years should not be admitted to school unless known to be immunised

* and ** For details of contact numbers see below

USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

School Nursing Services

Great Yarmouth area

Newberry Clinic,
Lowestoft Road, Gorleston
Great Yarmouth,
NR30 1BU
Tel 01493 442322

King's Lynn area

St James,
Extons Road,
King's Lynn,
Tel 01553 616370

Norwich area

Norwich PCT, The Health
Centre, Upton Road,
Norwich Tel 01603 508933

Thetford area

18 Bridewell Street,
Wymondham,
NR18 0AR Tel 01953 609441

School Medical Services

Great Yarmouth area

The Children's Centre,
Lowestoft Road, Gorleston,
Great Yarmouth, NR31 6SQ
Tel 01493 442322

King's Lynn area

St James, Exton's Road,
King's Lynn, PE30 5NU
Tel 01553 816372

Norwich area

Dept Community Paediatrics,
Norfolk & Norwich University
Hospital, Colney Lane, Norwich
NR1 3SR Tel 01603 286343

Thetford area

Child Health Centre,
Hospital Road,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
IP33 3ND Tel 01284 775063

Norfolk District Councils' Environmental Health Departments

[*Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk](#)

Tel 01553 616200

[*Breckland District Council](#)

Tel 01362 656870

[*Broadland District Council](#)

Tel 01603 431133

[*Great Yarmouth Borough Council](#)

Tel 01493 856100

[*North Norfolk District Council](#)

Tel (01263) 513811

[*Norwich City Council](#)

Tel 0844 980 3333

[*South Norfolk District Council](#)

Tel 01508 533633

[Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge Health Protection Unit](#)**

Consultant in Communicable
Disease Control

Thetford Community Healthy
Living Centre, Croxton Road,
Thetford IP24 1JD

Tel 01842 767757

* **See above** Gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and/or vomiting)

** **See above** Hepatitis A, Meningitis & Meningococcal Disease and Shingles (see Chickenpox)