



De La Salle School

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Dear Parent/Carer,

All of the schools in St Helens have been contacted by the Local Authority, on behalf of Public Health England, regarding higher than normal levels of illness with students across the borough. Below are the pertinent points of their letter:

- Across St Helens, we are currently experiencing increased reporting of diarrhoea and vomiting in school aged children consistent with viral gastroenteritis. This is often caused by Norovirus, a frequent cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in the community during the winter.
- The most common symptom of Norovirus is vomiting. Diarrhoea tends to be short-lived and less severe than with other causes of gastroenteritis. Other symptoms include nausea, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, chills and fever. The illness is usually self-limiting in nature and gets better without antibiotics, which are not appropriate for viral illnesses. Symptoms usually last between one and three days.
- Those reporting diarrhoea and vomiting should exclude themselves from school until 48 hours after the vomiting and/or diarrhoea have stopped. This is an important control measure which aims to limit the spread of this infection to others.

As a school, we have noticed an increase in sickness absence and, as you would expect, are following the guidance provided by Public Health England to all schools. Though this is nothing to be alarmed by, I would ask parents to be vigilant of the symptoms and encourage your child to maintain good hygiene, in particular washing hands regularly.

I will, of course, keep you updated should we hear any more from Public Health England or the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher