



MERIDIAN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

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Monday 22nd April 2024

Sickness Outbreak in school

Dear Parents/Carers

You may be aware that we have had a sickness outbreak in school, mainly in Year One.

Firstly, I would like to reassure everyone that this is not, as suggested by some parents/carers, food poisoning from school lunches on Friday. If the sickness had been caused by food poisoning, then there would be high levels of sickness absence across the school and this is not the case. In fact, last week we had a few cases of sickness prior to Friday lunchtime and indeed several children who did not have a school lunch on Friday and have been sick over the weekend.

Having sought advice from the Local Authority team and looked at NHS guidance, these high levels of sickness may have been caused by a norovirus outbreak, mainly in Year One. Obviously I am not a medical practitioner, so I cannot confirm this definitively, however, whatever the cause, it has clearly spread quickly across the Year One classes.

The advice is to follow NHS guidance for norovirus which states that *"norovirus can spread easily through communities and so outbreaks are common in settings where people have close contact, such as schools and nurseries"*

The main advice is if your child has caught this sickness bug, to keep them off school for 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.

One of the most important ways to try and stop norovirus spreading is good hand hygiene and so I have asked the Year One teachers to remind children about how they can wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

The children always wash their hands before eating their lunch and are reminded to do the same after going to the toilet. Please could you also remind your children about the importance of

Headteacher - Claire Westcott
Roderick Avenue North, Peacehaven
East Sussex BN10 8BZ
Telephone: 01273 584212
e-mail: office@meridian.e-sussex.sch.uk
web: www.meridianschool.co.uk





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washing hands after going to the toilet as I am sure you will appreciate, we cannot monitor this continuously throughout the day.

Please let me assure you that all areas of the school are thoroughly cleaned after school every day, including classrooms and toilets. I have asked EMCOR to have an extra focus on Year 1 this week until this sickness passes.

For more information please go to:

- [Norovirus \(vomiting bug\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Norovirus: Information for parents, schools, and early years providers if a child is sick – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk)

On a separate note, I understand that some communications over the weekend between parents were criticising the school for not contacting parents/carers or responding to emails sent to the school office over the weekend. **Our school office opening hours are Monday to Friday 8.15pm – 3.45pm and this includes responding to emails.**

Please note, our school jotter is used throughout the school day by the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher only and this is not accessed over the weekend unless there is whole school emergency that requires immediate communication that cannot wait until Monday. I am sure you will understand that it is not an expectation that school staff work over their weekends to communicate to parents.

If your child is currently off school with this sickness bug, I do hope they feel better very soon and we look forward to seeing them when they are well enough to return.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Ms. Westcott
Headteacher

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