

04 January 2023

Back to school advice issued amid high levels of flu, COVID-19 and scarlet fever

Dear parents/guardians,

The Council and local NHS wanted to alert you to a press release issued yesterday by the UKHSA, regarding current health concerns.

As pupils and students return to school following the Christmas break, UKHSA is reminding people that winter illnesses continue to circulate at high levels.

Following simple steps can help protect children, minimise the spread of illness in education and childcare settings and protect wider communities.

Flu and coronavirus (COVID-19) are [currently circulating at high levels](#) and are likely to continue to increase in coming weeks. High numbers of scarlet fever, which is caused by group A streptococcus, also [continue to be reported](#).

Professor Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said: "It's important to minimise the spread of infection in schools and other education and childcare settings as much as possible. If your child is unwell and has a fever, they should stay home from school or nursery until they feel better and the fever has resolved."

Helping children to learn about the importance of good hand hygiene is also key, so practice regular handwashing at home with soap and warm water. Catching coughs and sneezes in tissues then binning them is another simple way to help stop illness from spreading.

Adults should also try to stay home when unwell and if you do have to go out, wear a face covering. When unwell don't visit healthcare settings or visit vulnerable people unless urgent.

Remember that the flu vaccination is still available for all eligible groups and is the best protection against the virus. We have seen good uptake in older age groups but vaccination among young children remains low. Flu can be very unpleasant and in some cases can lead to more serious illness. Getting your child vaccinated protects them and others they come into contact with, and it's still not too late. Both the nasal and porcine free injectable alternative vaccines remain available.


Eligible children include:

- those aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2022
- all primary school-aged children
- some secondary school-aged children

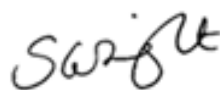
You can get more information [getting your child vaccinated against flu](#) on NHS.UK.

The school immunisation team will be back offering vaccinations in Luton schools from January 2023. Speak with your child/children's school for information on the dates of these visits. If you have queries regarding school aged immunisations please contact the immunisation team on 0300 790 0594, or email epunft.blmkimmunisation@nhs.net

Kind regards,



Nicky Poulain
Chief Primary Care Officer
BLMK Integrated Care Board



Sally Cartwright
Director of Public Health
Luton Council