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|  | **Public Health England South West**  3rd Floor, 2 Rivergate  Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EH  Follaton House, Plymouth Road  Totnes, Devon TQ9 5NE |  | T +44 (0)300 303 8162  F +44 (0)117 930 0205  F: +44 (0)1392 367356  www.gov.uk/phe |

Ref: HPZ: **218879**

04 February 2020

Re: Influenza at Winchelsea School

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You may be aware, there have been a number of children and staff unwell with acute respiratory tract infections. We are writing to let you know that we now think this is likely to be flu (influenza).

Symptoms of influenza (flu) are: cough, heavy cold symptoms, sore throat and fever.

We also have also been informed of a confirmed case of Scarlett Fever (see fact sheet enclosed)

Flu is generally not a serious illness and most people who have flu make a quick recovery at home. However, it can cause serious illness in those with other health problems.

In order to reduce spread of infection it is important to **keep children with any symptoms of flu-like illness away from school until they have recovered**, are free of symptoms and have not had a fever for at least 24 hours. Good hand washing is also important to reduce the risk to others,

**It is important that any children or household contacts (such as grandparents or pregnant women) who fit into any of the “at risk” group list below have taken up their seasonal flu vaccine.** If you believe your child or any household member fits into the list of “at risk” groups below and has not already had their seasonal flu jab, please ensure they visit the GP to get the seasonal flu jab**.**

The following are in an **“at risk” group and eligible for flu vaccination:**

* those aged 65 years and over
* those aged six months to under 65 years with chronic lung, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease (including learning disabilities), or those who are immunosuppressed and those with diabetes mellitus
* pregnant women
* those resident long term in care homes
* morbidly obese with BMI >40

In addition, in 2019-20, the following groups are also eligible for flu vaccination:

* All children aged 2-4 or in school years reception to year 6
* Carers

**If children are**

* **in an “at risk” group AND**
* **either develop symptoms of flu or has been exposed to someone who has symptoms, they may be eligible for antiviral medication e.g Tamiflu/oseltamivir.**

If you believe that your child is in an ‘at risk’ group, you should contact their GP to discuss if treatment is necessary to prevent or reduce the severity of the illness. If there are any difficulties with this, please ask your GP to contact the HPT on the number above. Please show them this letter.

**Antiviral medication is most effective if given within 48 hours of onset of symptoms or exposure to flu.**

Children and fit adults under the age of 65 years who are not in one of the groups mentioned above are not offered the vaccine as part of the national programme and are not eligible to receive antiviral medication for preventative purposes.

I have enclosed a fact sheet for your information. If you have any questions please either contact your GP or ring the Health Protection Team on:

0300 303 8162 Option 1 then Option 1

Yours faithfully,

Lesley Peters

Health Protection Practitioner

SW Health Protection Team

Public Health England