

Dear Parents/Carers and Guardians,

With the new school term starting, children spend more time together, which can lead to more colds, flu, and other illnesses.

Here are some ways to help keep your child healthy and in school:

1. Keep your child's vaccinations up to date

Measles and whooping cough are still around. The best way to protect your child from getting sick is to make sure they have had all their vaccines. If you are unsure, you can ask your GP or use the NHS app to check.

Vaccination catch-up clinics are available for children up to Year 7 across Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. Pregnant women can also get vaccines, including the new RSV vaccine. RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) is a virus that can be dangerous for babies. No appointment is needed for these clinics. More details are below.

2. Make sure your child gets the flu vaccine

Flu can make children very sick. The flu vaccine reduces the risk of needing hospital care. Most children from age 2 to age 16 can get the vaccine. Children with certain health conditions can also get it. The vaccine is usually a quick, painless spray in the nose. There is also a version without pork ingredients.

Children in school (Reception to Year 11) will get their flu vaccine at school or at community clinics. Children aged 2-3 or with certain health conditions can get the flu vaccine at their GP. You will receive letters about this soon. Please sign the school form or accept the GP invitation. Vaccinating your child also helps protect others, like family members, from getting the flu.

3. Teach your child good handwashing habits

Washing hands helps stop the spread of germs. Remind your child to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Teach them to use tissues for coughs and sneezes and to throw them in the bin afterwards. You can find free teaching materials using the QR code below.

4. Know when to keep your child at home

Sometimes it's hard to know if your child should stay home. For minor illnesses, like a slight cough or cold, it's usually okay to send them to school. But if they have a high temperature or a rash, keep them at home and speak to your GP. Check the NHS advice below for more details.

Getting your child vaccinated and teaching them to wash their hands are the best ways to keep them healthy and in school. Please respond to vaccination invitations when you receive them. Thank you for helping to keep our community healthy.

Yours sincerely





Vicky Head

Director of Public Health, Bedford Borough Council



Resources for parents/carers

Topic	Link	QR code
Information about measles	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/	
MMR vaccine leaflet	MMR vaccination (publishing.service.gov.uk)	
Information about whooping cough	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/whooping-cough/	
Details about walk-in vaccination clinics	https://blmkhealthandcarepartnership.org/your-health-and-care/childhood-immunisations/	
Information about children's flu vaccine	https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/	
Teaching your children about bugs and hygiene	https://www.e-bug.eu/teachers	
When should I keep my child home from school?	https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/	
Information about RSV for pregnant women	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv/	