

Schools Health Protection Update

Hertfordshire County Council



December 2025



Health Protection Update: Winter Term



This newsletter contains recommended Public Health content to inform important messaging home to parents, carers and guardians.

Information to be shared with Parents/Guardians/Carers

- [Flu](#)
- [Immunisation schedule for January 2026](#)
- [Cold weather preparedness guidance – parents/guardian](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Service Winter Water Safety](#)
- [How to use your Pharmacy this winter](#)



Next issue due – 23rd March 2026



Information to be shared with Parents/Guardians/Carers

Flu

Flu is circulating in the community with the number of people infected higher than we usually see at this time of year. If your child missed their flu vaccination in school or you wish to change your mind, it is not too late! Check here for community catch up clinics [School vaccinations - Catch up Clinics](#)

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Immunisations schedule for January 2026

Delivering immunisations in schools improves access to vaccines and helps to achieve higher levels of protection against diseases. We would like to encourage parents to support our school's vaccination programme by completing the consent forms or contacting the vaccination team at hct.csaisherts@nhs.net.

There will be opportunities to catch up with routine immunisations for children who have missed them [Hertfordshire - Community and school aged immunisations](#)

Further guidance in relation to the Measles, mumps and Rubella vaccine is listed under [MMR \(Measles, Mumps, Rubella\) vaccination](#)

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Cold weather guidance – Parents/Carers/Guardians



As we come into winter, we would like to draw your attention to the following links that will help you and your family keep well and warm this winter.

The ICB Healthier Together website below provides some useful information on managing minor illnesses throughout winter:

[Healthier Together - worried your child is unwell?](#)

The NHS website below advises parents and carers on some of the common symptoms of childhood illness, explains what steps to take to treat them at home and when to think about getting further help.

[NHS - Is my child too ill for School?](#)

The [Be Ready for Anything](#) webpage gives a comprehensive overview of some of the risks that the County faces over the winter period, with details of how you can prepare you and your family for those events.

Further advice and guidance on winter preparedness, can be found on the Government website.

[Tips for keeping Warm this winter](#) and [Prepare Campaign - be informed about hazards](#)

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Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service winter water safety message

Background

Slippery paths, patches of ice and a lack of daylight can make being near water more dangerous than in the summer months. If someone falls into freezing cold water the temperature will make it difficult to control breathing, massively reduce the ability to use limbs to assist with climbing out, or could even result in a heart attack.

Stay Safe this Winter

Taking a nice walk in cold weather with your family, friends or dogs in tow can be really refreshing, but please make sure you know some simple tips on how to stay safe this winter.

Areas with frozen lakes, ponds, canals and reservoirs can be beautiful places to visit during the winter months, but all too often many people risk their lives venturing onto frozen water.

Safety Tips for Enjoyable and Safe Walks in the Winter

Keep back from the edge

When walking alongside water keep back from the edge.

Only use well-lit areas

Time your walks to make the most of the daylight. If you must walk in the evening, only use areas well illuminated, or take a route away from the water.

Keep dogs on leads

Ensure dogs are kept on their lead or restraint when near water/ice. Don't throw sticks or toys into the water or onto the ice, as dogs could be compelled to retrieve them.

Teach children not to go on the ice

Educate children to know the dangers of playing on or near the water/ice and not to walk onto the surface of frozen water under any circumstance!

In an Emergency Call 999 – **do not** enter cold water or ice to rescue. Make sure you know exactly where you are – consider something like an OS locate app, such as [what3words///](#), which easily identifies your exact location for swift and effective emergency access.

Try and reach them from the bank using a rope, pole, tree branch, clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach.

Float to Live

If you fall into the water – try to stay calm, float on your back and call for help.

If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Preserve heat by pressing your arms by your side and keep your legs together. Keep your head clear of the water.

Further information on Winter Water Safety can be found on [Winter Water Safety](#)

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How to use your Pharmacy this winter.

Looking after your sick child – help us help you

Having a poorly child can be frightening, and it is sometimes hard to know what to do for the best. If you are concerned about your child's health, visit 111 online at www.111.nhs.uk (for children aged 5 and over) or alternatively call 111 or speak to your local pharmacist or general practice.

Most minor childhood illnesses are caused by viruses and there is a lot you can do at home to help your child to feel better. If you need extra help a pharmacist can help, they are trained to recognise the signs of a more serious illness and will direct you to an A&E if that's the best option for your child.

Helpful advice written by doctors and other clinical staff is available on the [Healthier Together webpage](#). There are easy-to follow 'traffic light' descriptions for different illnesses to help parents and carers understand how serious their child's symptoms are and give advice on what to do if symptoms get worse. There is advice on when and how you can treat your child safely at home, and when you need to get urgent help. This website can be translated into other languages, should you need it.

Top advice from experts on looking after a child at home:

- If your child is distressed, you should consider giving them paracetamol or ibuprofen. Use one of these medicines to start and if your child has not improved 2-3 hours later you may want to try giving the other medicine. Do not give more than the maximum daily dose of either medicine (follow dosage instructions on the medicine bottle). Information about the correct dosage of [Paracetamol](#) and [Ibuprofen](#) for your child can be found on the NHS website as well as more information on how to treat the [fever](#).
- Children with a fever should be dressed as normal for the climate they are in. Do not over or under dress them. Fanning your child, cold bathing and tepid sponging/using a damp cloth can cause discomfort so it is not advised.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.
- If a rash appears, do the [glass test](#).
- Keep your baby/child as comfortable as possible.
- Offer them simple food and regular drinks. Where a baby is breastfed, continue breast feeding.
- If they are vomiting, offer small frequent drinks as this is more likely to stay down.
- Keep an eye on your child day and night.
- Fever is common in babies up to 48 hours after receiving immunisations - consider giving regular paracetamol. If your child is due their vaccinations, postpone until after their fever has improved.
- Keep the room they are in airy without being draughty. If the room is too warm, they'll probably feel worse.
- Never fall asleep with a sick baby on the sofa with you, even if you're both exhausted. This increases the chances of [sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\)](#).
- If you need to keep your child away from nursery or school while they are unwell and have a fever, please notify the nursery or school.
- If your child is still not improving you can seek help and advice on how to treat their illness from a pharmacist, your health visitor, nurse practitioner, or GP. Use the red, amber, green criteria to guide [Fever / High Temperature :: Hertfordshire and West Essex Healthier Together](#)

If your child is ill, you can also try your local pharmacy. The Pharmacy First programme means that you can get treatment for your child for these conditions without having to go to a GP:

- **Earache** (children aged 1-17)
- **Sore throat** (over 5s)
- **Infected insect bites** (over 1s)
- **Impetigo** (over 1s)

By going straight to your local pharmacy, you can have a consultation with a trained clinical professional and receive advice and even medication if it is needed, meaning they could be on the road to recovery and back at school as soon as possible, no waiting for an appointment at your GP practice.

Remember that you know your child best. If you are not sure whether your child is seriously unwell, call 111 or your GP for advice. If you think your child is critically unwell [NHS - urgent and emergency care services](#)

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Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

From the 'Healthcare, Public Health & Health Protection Team'

