NHS
Derby and Derbyshire
Integrated Care Board

NHS
Lincolnshire
Integrated Care Board

NHS
Nottingham and
Nottinghamshire
Integrated Care Board

Sir John Robinson House
Sir John Robinson Way
Arnold
Nottingham
NG5 6DA

2 November 2026

Dear parent or carer

KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN WELL THIS WINTER

As the winter months approach, coughs, colds and other common illnesses become more frequent. We want to help families across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire get the right advice and care when they need it.

Right care at the right time

Local NHS websites offer advice about common conditions in babies and children, the symptoms to look out for and where to get help. This information can help you decide when to care for your child at home, when to seek medical advice and which service to use.

Find local advice here: www.notts.icb.nhs.uk/childrens-health-and-wellbeing

Please be assured that GP practices and other health services will want to see your child if you are worried about their health or wellbeing. Babies can become unwell quickly, so keep a close eye on their symptoms and trust your instincts.

Your general practice team includes a range of healthcare professionals who work in your practice and the wider community. Depending on their needs, your child may be seen by another member of the team.

If you are unsure what to do, visit 111.nhs.uk or call 111. Call 999 in a life-threatening emergency.

Pharmacies

Most community pharmacies offer the Pharmacy First service. Where appropriate, this can include NHS medicines for:

- sinusitis in children aged 12 years and over
- sore throat in children aged 5 years and over
- impetigo in children aged 1 year and over
- infected insect bites in children aged 1 year and over
- earache in children aged 1 to 17 years. This service is not available from distance-selling pharmacies.

Dr Kathy McLean OBE, Chair
Dr Amanda Sullivan, Chief Executive

Your GP practice may refer your child, but you can also visit a local pharmacy and ask how the team can help.

Over-the-counter medicines, including paracetamol, ibuprofen and some eye drops, can help with the symptoms of many minor illnesses. A pharmacist can advise you about suitable medicines. Always follow the instructions on the packaging.

Vaccinations

One of the best ways to help your family stay well this winter is to make sure everyone is up to date with the vaccinations they are eligible for.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of coughs and colds and can make some babies seriously unwell. The RSV vaccine is offered during pregnancy to help protect newborn babies. If you are eligible, speak to your GP practice or maternity team.

Most eligible children can receive a flu vaccination through their local School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS), those children Aged 2-3 can get their vaccination at their GP practice or a community pharmacy. In addition, children who are identified as at risk can receive their vaccination at their GP practice, a community pharmacy or choose to use the school immunisation team. Children are usually given the flu vaccine as a nasal spray rather than an injection, but a gelatine-free flu vaccine injection is also available if they cannot have or prefer not to use the nasal spray. Vaccination can help protect your child from serious illness this winter.

This year, parents and carers may notice a change to how they receive consent requests for school vaccinations. Previously, schools distributed links to the online consent form on behalf of the immunisation service. With the introduction of MAVIS (Manage Vaccinations in Schools), parents and carers will now receive secure consent invitations directly from SAIS by email or text message.

Developed by NHS England specifically for school age children, MAVIS will enable the immunisation team to communicate directly with families, providing vaccination information, reminders and consent requests in a more streamlined way.

It is not too late for your child to catch up on their other vaccinations too. The MMRV vaccine is normally given at 12 months, with a second dose at 18 months. Older children and adults can still be caught up with MMR if they were not vaccinated when they were younger. Two doses give long-lasting protection.

Speak to your GP practice if you think you or your child needs to catch up.

Find local vaccination information here: www.notts.icb.nhs.uk/vaccinations

Absence from school

If your child is unwell and cannot attend school, you do not need a fit note or sick note from their GP.

If your child feels well enough to attend, you can ask the school to give them an over-the-counter medicine to manage their symptoms. This is at the headteacher's discretion and should follow the school's medicines policy. It may include medicines such as paracetamol, ibuprofen or antihistamines. A prescription is not required.

The medicine should be in its original packaging, clearly labelled with your child's name and accompanied by any consent information the school requires. Staff must be able to follow the age-related instructions on the packaging.

Coughs and colds

If your child has a cough or cold, encourage them to cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw it away and wash their hands afterwards. Where possible, they should avoid close contact with older people and others who may be more vulnerable while they are unwell.

It can be helpful to keep age-appropriate liquid paracetamol or ibuprofen at home for mild pain or fever. Follow the instructions on the packaging and ask a pharmacist if you need advice.

Thank you for supporting NHS services across Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.

Yours faithfully



Dr Dave Briggs
Executive Director of Outcomes (Medical)