

[Date Here]

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s),

This letter is to inform you that there has been an increase in gastroenteritis in your child's classroom. Gastroenteritis can be caused by a viral, bacteria, or a parasite, and symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, and stomach pain. Viral causes of gastroenteritis are the most common; they are contagious and spread easily and quickly, causing common outbreaks.

Gastroenteritis often spreads by having direct contact with an infected person, touching contaminated surfaces, and then putting unwashed hands in your mouth, or by consuming contaminated food or water. Contamination can occur in multiple ways. Some examples are: an infected person touching food with bare hands that have microscopic feces (poop) or vomit particles on them; food that is placed on a counter or surface that has feces or vomit particles on it; tiny drops of vomit from an infected person spray through the air and land on the food; or food is grown or harvested with contaminated water (ex. oysters harvested from contaminated water, or fruit and vegetables watered with contaminated water in the field).

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) strongly encourages good hand hygiene, particularly before eating, after toileting and diapering, and throughout the day when children's hands get dirty, to prevent transmission of gastroenteritis. Individuals who have symptoms of gastroenteritis should not share food or prepare meals for others. In addition, it is important to clean the environment, including bathrooms and food preparation surfaces. Use a diluted bleach solution containing a ratio of 1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water.

If your child or anyone in your household has been vomiting or has diarrhea:

- Contact your regular healthcare provider to discuss your child's symptoms.
- Contact the school nurse to report your child's symptoms.

**An individual's vomiting and diarrhea must stop for 24 hours before returning to school. Food Handlers should return after 48 hours since their last vomiting and diarrhea episode.**

If you have questions regarding this information, [please reach out to your school nurse.](#)

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[\[Principal\]](#) [\[School Nurse\]](#)