



December 15, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Odyssey Charter School considers the well-being of our students and staff to be of the utmost importance. With that in mind, that we are writing to inform that we were notified this morning of an increased number of children are home ill with gastrointestinal symptoms and have had several students present to the clinic with these symptoms as well.

A common cause of gastrointestinal outbreaks is norovirus, which is what we suspect based on the presenting symptoms of stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. Norovirus outbreaks increase in the colder months of the year are extremely contagious. Norovirus infection can cause vomiting and diarrhea approximately 24-48 hours after exposure to the agent. Symptoms typically resolve within a few days without treatment. Although norovirus generally does not cause a severe illness, it can result in dehydration particularly in children and the elderly. Norovirus outbreaks result from person to person spread or from consumption of contaminated food or drinks. The virus is easily transmitted person to person. The following are recommended to prevent and limit transmission:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toileting and before eating or preparing food. Hands should be washed with warm water and soap for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- **Hand sanitizer is not very effective against norovirus.**
- Good Hygiene is the best way to prevent transmission of gastrointestinal illness.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surface immediately after an episode of diarrhea or vomiting by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- If using liquid household bleach prepared daily, one part bleach to nine parts water (1:10 dilution) is recommended.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with feces or vomitus (use hot water and soap).
- **Persons who are experiencing symptoms of gastrointestinal illness should stay home from school until 24 hours after symptoms have stopped naturally (without symptom reducing medications).**

Please reach out to your child's teacher or the school nurse if your child is home experiencing these symptoms.

For more information on norovirus, please visit the CDC website here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/index.html>

Respectfully,

Kelly Sequeira, R.N.  
Odyssey Charter School Nurse  
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