

**Health Protection Agency**

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Dear Parent / Guardian

A small number of children who recently went on a school trip have been notified to us as having a form of food poisoning, caused by the shigella bacteria.

There is a rumour circulating that this is related to some cases of Ecoli 1057 which have been reported in the area. I would like to reassure you that these two illnesses are caused by a different bacteria and not related in any way.

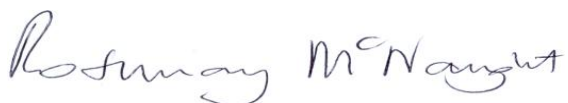
A leaflet is enclosed for your information.

This bacteria spreads from person to person very easily and only a few bacteria are needed to cause infection.

It is very important to ensure that all family members are washing their hands thoroughly especially after using the toilet, and before preparing/eating meals.

If your child or family members develop symptoms, please contact your GP and ensure that they do not attend school or any other day care facilities.

Yours sincerely



Dr Rosy McNaught  
Consultant in Communicable Disease Control

## **Dysentery - Advice for Parents**

Dear Parent

Please read the following information carefully.

### **What is Dysentery?**

Dysentery is the name given to the diarrhoea that is caused by infection with the germ Shigella.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Dysentery starts with the sudden onset of diarrhoea. The stools may have blood, mucus or pus in them, and there may be fever, feeling sick, vomiting, and stomach pains. The illness usually lasts about 4-7 days.

### **How is it spread?**

Dysentery is highly infectious. It spreads very easily from person to person directly from hand to hand or indirectly by touching contaminated surfaces such as taps, or door handles.

### **How can it be prevented?**

The most effective way to prevent the spread of dysentery is to make sure hands are washed very thoroughly after using the toilet and before eating meals. Young children will probably need help to make sure their hands are properly washed. If your child has dysentery you can help to prevent spread to other family members by regularly wiping down taps, door and flush handles with a disinfectant solution.

### **Should children stay away from school?**

Children should stay away from school while they have diarrhoea. They may go back to school once they have had normal stools for 48 hours.

Contacts of cases should go to school as normal.