# [school letterhead]

[Date]

**Potential Exposure to Gastrointestinal Illness**

Dear Staff, Student, or Parent/Legal Guardian,

We are writing to inform you that our school has had an increased number of absences due to vomiting and/or diarrhea in some of our staff and students.

Since illnesses involving vomiting and/or diarrhea can be very contagious, we have implemented steps for controlling the spread in our building. People with these types of illnesses can avoid passing on their infection to their family and close contacts by taking the following precautions:

* The best way to prevent disease spread is to **wash hands** regularly and thoroughly, particularly before preparing food, before eating, and after using the toilet. People with this illness can shed the virus in their stool for days after symptoms stop, so continued and proper hand washing is essential. Children’s hand washing should be supervised by an adult after every toilet use.
* **If your child is ill with diarrhea or vomiting, keep them home** until they are well for a full 24 hours after their last episode of illness (vomiting or diarrhea).This will help to prevent the spread of the illness to others. If the symptoms persist, please be sure to contact your health care provider. If your child goes to see their doctor, please request that your child’s doctor collects a stool sample for testing.
* When someone in your home is ill with diarrhea and/or vomiting, a solution of ½ cup household bleach in 1 gallon of water is recommended for cleaning hard surfaces in your home, such as kitchens, bathrooms, and other surfaces that individuals touch. The solution should be made fresh daily. Bleach is one of the most effective cleaning products against certain viruses. **Never allow bleach and other cleaners to mix together.**
* Vomit or stool on carpets and upholstery should be removed, cleaned with paper towels, and steamed at 160 degrees for 5 minutes. Products such as Lysol or Pine Sol can be used on fabric for odor control but will not kill certain viruses, so should be followed with steam cleaning as above.
* Always use gloves and a mask when cleaning up vomit and stool as the splattering of these materials may contain infectious particles and can even be carried in the air. **Always wash your hands thoroughly after cleaning.**

For additional information visit the CDC Norovirus page: <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/index.html>

If you have any questions, please feel free to call [school contact] at [phone number].