

Worcestershire Handwashing Strategy: **EARLY YEARS SETTINGS**

**CLEAN
HANDS**  **SAFE
HANDS**



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BACKGROUND

As we all know, keeping our hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid becoming ill and spreading germs to others. Handwashing campaigns have been particularly prevalent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as COVID-19 can be spread from one person to another by contaminated hands.

Good hand washing can help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as other infections, including norovirus, salmonellosis, and respiratory infections, such as influenza, colds and other coronavirus.

In 2021 there was a considerable rise in the prevalence of the Norovirus and many people are unaware that hand sanitisers are NOT an effective protection against this common sickness bug.

Hand sanitisers should be used in addition to washing with soap and water and only as an alternative when soap and water is not available. Although hand sanitisers provide a convenient addition to hand cleanliness which proved advantageous during the COVID-19 pandemic, they should not replace the need to wash our hands with soap and water, which is still the most effective way to keep our hands clean.

Teaching children about good hygiene during childhood helps to embed healthy habits, which contribute to lifelong good health. This toolkit provides ideas which support the importance of hand washing and offers activities to encourage children to remain regular handwashers as part of their everyday routine.

This toolkit has been designed specifically for use by children in early years.



WHEN SHOULD WE WASH OUR HANDS?

Before we get started on ideas to encourage children to keep their hands clean, it's good to remember the key times to wash our hands:

Key times to wash hands:

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before and after eating food.
- After using the toilet.
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing our nose.
- After children's 'play-time'.
- After handling worn masks and before handling clean masks.
- When returning from a public place, such as a playground or a shop.
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhoea.
- After changing nappies or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- Before and after treating a cut or wound.
- After caring for someone sick.
- After touching animals or pets.

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS

The NHS recommends that we should wash our hands for around 20 seconds (roughly the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice). Sometimes showing children why they need to wash their hands is the best way to encourage hand washing.

More recently there has been some great lessons in handwashing techniques which includes the ‘How to wash your hands NHS song’ which is available below.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9VjeIWLnEg

Of course, children benefit from easy to remember instructions. Explain simply (e.g. as below) how germs like to get into all the little nooks and crannies of our hands, which is why it’s important to wash them properly.

1. **Lather your hands using liquid soap.**
2. **Spread the lather around your hands, fingers and nails.**
3. **Scrub the tips of your fingers.**
4. **Wash all over – including right around the thumb and the backs of fingers.**
5. **Rinse off the lather and dry thoroughly.**



Watch this video to find out the best way to wash your hands:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands



WHAT TO USE TO KEEP HANDS CLEAN:

Soap and water is better than hand sanitiser!

Alcohol-based hand sanitisers are effective against some viruses (such as coronavirus); however, they are not effective against norovirus or gastroenteritis. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to prevent all infection. However, if soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol

Water alone is not effective

Soap will remove considerably more disease-causing germs than washing hands with water alone.

Liquid soap is best

Generally, it is better to use liquid soap than bar soap, particularly in a shared setting. However, bar soap is better than no soap.

No advantage to using antibacterial soap

When following the handwashing steps outlined above, all soaps are equally effective at removing disease-causing germs. Antibacterial soap does not offer an advantage over regular soap.



PRACTICAL TIPS:

Below are some practical tips you can consider

- Make hand washing as accessible as possible. You may need to stagger hand washing for groups of children to help with logistics. If possible, you could think about having extra hand washing stations in classrooms. It's also important to make sure soap and paper towels are available at sinks.
- Lead by example. This helps to instil a good hand washing culture in your setting. Encourage staff to wash their hands alongside the children. This is also a good way to teach and monitor children when washing their hands.
- Be clear about when children need to wash their hands, so it becomes part of their routine. Children will be quick to self-regulate their handwashing routine.
- Remind children regularly. Posters also help to remind children about good hygiene practice – perhaps ask the children to design their own handwashing posters to display.
- Reward good handwashing practices. Use fun and meaningful rewards to help to instil good handwashing routines. Perhaps reward children who are helpful in reminding people when they've forgotten, or reward those children with the best, most consistent hand washing technique. Classes may also find a hand washing chart helpful too, particularly for younger children. Foster the idea of hand-hygiene champions at your education setting.

Online resources developed by the UK Health Security Agency, in collaboration with teachers and scientists.

Interactive sessions with children are also a great way of demonstrating how germs are spread. 'E-Bug' is operated by the UK Health Security Agency and is a free educational resource for classroom and home use. E-bug makes learning about the spread, prevention and treatment of infection and micro-organisms, fun and accessible for all teachers and children.

E-bugs resources:

www.e-bug.eu

For early years specific resources:

Early Years Resources (e-bug.eu)

Pupils ages 3-5 are introduced to positive behaviours for hand washing, respiratory and oral hygiene. Lesson plans are designed to complement the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

Here follows an additional range of interactive activities, such as games, quizzes, and debate kits. Any websites cited are reputable websites to support learning.



SOAP IN ACTION:

This activity perfectly illustrates how effective soap is at banishing germs!

Supplies:

- Bowl of water
- Soap in a small dish or liquid soap
- Jar of pepper (or other dried herbs work just as effectively)

Watch the following videos to demonstrate:

youtu.be/k8_emfEJNGg

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/germs-experiment

Or follow the steps below:

Instructions:

Liberally add pepper to the bowl of water. Experiment with different amounts of pepper to see if using more or less will change the outcome of the experiment.

Next, the children put a blob of liquid soap on their finger and immediately touch the water in the centre of the bowl. They should see the pepper quickly disperse from the centre of the bowl to the edges.

When soap is added to the water, it lowers the surface tension of the water. The water molecules try to stick together and move away from the soap while carrying the pepper with them. It gives a great visual representation as to why soap should be used when washing hands, with the pepper representing the germs.

FROZEN HANDS

You can help children wash pretend germs off frozen hands in a sensory/water table or bucket.

Removing the “germs” from another set of “hands” can make the need for handwashing more explicit for your child.

Supplies:

- latex gloves
- water
- freezer
- washable markers
- water table or large bucket
- soap
- towel

Steps:

- Fill a latex glove full of water. Allow a little extra room for it to expand.
- Freeze overnight.
- In the morning colour with washable markers.
- Place in water table or a large plastic bucket.
- Invite your children to follow the handwashing steps to clean the hands.

See website for illustrations:

www.123homeschool4me.com/20-ideas-to-make-handwashing-for-kids-fun



REAL SCIENCE: GLITTER GERMS EXPERIMENT

**Glitter. It gets everywhere.
Just like germs! Use glitter to
demonstrate how germs spread:**

Glitter can help to demonstrate how easily germs can spread, illustrating why it is so important to wash your hands. Watch the link or follow the steps below:

www.childrensmuseum.org/blog/real-science-glitter-germs

Ask all of the children in the group to rub baby oil all over their hands.

Ask half of the children in the group to sprinkle glitter on their hands. This represents the germs which can be easily spread within the classroom.

Ask the children to shake hands with each other. What happens to the germs? The children will see how the glitter spreads, including to those who didn't have glitter on their hands to start with.

Ask the children to pass an object, such as a pencil case or ruler to others within the group, or to touch the door handle. This will demonstrate how germs are passed on to each other via different objects that are handled and spread around the classroom.

REMOVE THAT GLITTER!

This follows on from doing the 'Glitter Germs Experiment' and will help demonstrate how effective different ways of cleaning hands can be.

- Ask some of the children to clean their hands using a baby wipe.
- Ask some children to clean their hands with just warm water and dry with a paper towel.
- Ask some children to clean their hands with soap and warm water, ensuring they have washed them for 20 seconds and dry with a paper towel.
- Ask the children to show each other how much glitter is left on their hands. Did the germs go away?

This should demonstrate that whilst other methods of removal may get rid of some of the glitter (acting as germs in this case) and make our hands appear cleaner, it won't get rid of all the germs. In contrast, those who washed with soap and water should have the cleanest hands, free from glitter!

This is a great multi-sensory approach to teaching children about germs.



CREATE A HAND WASHING SENSORY BIN!

What you need:

- plastic tub
- warm water
- soap dispenser/liquid soap
- dolls/action figures that can go in water
- scrubber brush/tooth brush
- towel
- vinyl tablecloth (optional)

Set up:

Place a plastic tub with warm water on top of a plastic tablecloth or a big towel. Next, put some dolls/action figures and soap dispensers within your sensory bin.

Show your child how to stick out the doll's hands and squeeze soap onto them. Practice rubbing the doll's hands together to create suds and counting to 20 (or singing a favourite song, like the Paw Patrol Theme Song). The children can use the scrubbing brush to clean the dolls and have fun during the process. Next, rinse the doll's hands in the water and dry with a towel.

Repeat!


SING A SONG

A simple way to have fun with hand washing is to involve song! It might also help with the timing of hand washing – the government has provided the following guidance,



“Everyone should wash their hands regularly with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, to reduce the risk of illness.”

Happy Birthday is a great place to start. Everyone knows it and it happily hits the 20-second mark. But it can get tiresome quickly.

Have a go at one of these fab handwashing songs:

Twinkle, twinkle little star 
 Look how clean my two hands are
 With soap and water, wash and scrub
 Got those germs off, rub-a-dub-dub
 Twinkle, twinkle little star
 Look how clean my two hands are.

To the tune of Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Wash, Wash, Wash your hands 
 Wash them nice and clean.
 Scrub them here (with hand motion scrubbing together)
 Scrub them there (with hand motion scrubbing tops of hands)
 And scrub them in between (with hand motion scrubbing between fingers)
 Wash, wash, wash, your hands
 Play our handy game
 Rub and scrub, scrub and rub
 Germs go down the drain HEY! 

Thank you for your contribution to promoting healthy and hygienic hands within Worcestershire

Further quizzes, posters, and activities are available at:
www.childrenshandwashing.co.uk/teaching-support

