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Dear Head of Establishment

You will perhaps recall our writing in September 2007 about the Scottish Government's National Hand Hygiene Campaign, enclosing a pack containing a range of hand washing related materials designed to help young children learn about the importance of hand hygiene. The pack was intended to help encourage children develop a lifelong habit of regular hand washing from an early age.

With the advent of influenza A H1N1 (commonly known as swine flu) these hygiene messages are all the more relevant. Good hand washing and hygiene practices can help reduce the incidence of the flu. We are therefore pleased to enclose further copies of the pack, which continues to place the emphasis on making hand washing a fun and natural activity. It provides several useful materials to support staff in developing hand washing related activities and is designed to be used with children between the ages of three and six, although your staff may be able to adapt some of it to include slightly older children. The pack, which was originally developed with the help of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), contains a short DVD featuring a cartoon character called Handy, some posters and stickers of Handy and a range of Handy activity materials, all of which are free to be copied for use by educational establishments. In addition, these and other materials can be downloaded from the Health Protection Scotland website at www.washyourhandsofthem.com

The key addition to the previous packs is the respiratory message about catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue, disposing of that tissue and washing hands afterwards. Together with the hand hygiene messages these are vital ways of helping children to slow the spread of germs and protect themselves and others.

We hope that the children within your establishment will enjoy the materials in the enclosed packs. Hand hygiene is vitally important, not just to children but to everyone.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Sturgeon MSP
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