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Hand Wash Heroes 'Battle of the Germs' hand hygiene programme launches in schools across the UK

Kimberly-Clark Professional is embarking on the next stage of The Healthy Schools Project* with the roll-out of a new Hand Wash Heroes programme aimed at 7 to 11 year olds.

Built around the theme of ‘Battle of the Germs’, the new initiative provides teachers with exciting and informative learning materials to encourage primary school children to practice good hand hygiene to reduce the spread of germs that cause illness.

The ‘Battle of the Germs’ theme has been launched at an important time with the cold and flu season taking hold. Every day, thousands of children are absent from school due to minor illnesses that can be spread by poor hand hygiene. In the 2012 Autumn term alone, pupil absence increased to 4.7% in state primary schools, of which 3.2% was associated with illness, according to Department for Education figures.

‘Battle of the Germs’ is designed to link in with Science and PSHE subjects on the curriculum, covering a range of topics relating to micro-organisms and educating children on how germs are spread. To achieve this, Kimberly-Clark Professional has developed a lively and engaging toolkit for teachers which introduces a range of six characters, all inspired by real germs.

The characters have been given names that will appeal to children's sense of fun – Fun Guy, YoGirl and Vaccinator (good germs) and Viro, Bacterio and Dr Blister (bad germs). Each is designed to help children learn about the roles performed by different kinds of micro-organisms.
Schools participating in The Healthy Schools Project* will receive a toolkit for teachers, containing lesson plans and rewards for the children including certificates and bookmarks. Kimberly-Clark Professional hand hygiene dispensers, along with themed posters help to engage children in the washroom and encourage them to wash and dry their hands correctly.

Education Resources

Hand Hygiene Dispensers

Dr Louise Vickerman, Education Manager at Kimberly-Clark Professional, said: “We are very excited to be introducing the next stage of our Hand Wash Heroes programme. The materials we’ve created for the ‘Battle of the Germs' theme reflect the interests and educational requirements of primary school pupils in the 7-11 age group. The aim is to teach children why good hygiene practices are important and also to make hand washing fun!”

She added: “Absenteeism through illness deprives children of valuable learning time and impacts on parents who often have to take time off work to care for their children when they’re unwell. Illness among pupils often affects teachers, too, causing disruption to the whole class if teachers are absent from school. Good hand hygiene is a powerful way to help parents, teachers and pupils to stay healthy. With the start of a new school term and the cold and flu season taking hold, now is the perfect time to ensure that good hand hygiene is at the forefront of everyone’s minds.”

‘Battle of the Germs’ is the second stage of The Healthy Schools Project*, which was first launched in February 2013. The programme was initially introduced into pre-schools and primary schools aimed at children aged 3 to 7 in partnership with Disney under the theme of Hand Wash Heroes with Mickey & Friends. Kimberly-Clark
Professional created a range of Disney-branded learning materials and hand hygiene dispensers designed to encourage children in a fun way to take ownership of their own personal and classroom hygiene.

The Healthy Schools Project* has been designed to engage children and encourage them to take greater responsibility for, and care over, washing their hands to prevent the spread of common illnesses such as coughs, colds and stomach upsets. The initiative has proved highly successful with a large number of nurseries, pre- and primary schools signing up to the programme across the UK and Germany and committing to raise hygiene awareness amongst pupils.

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Notes for editors:

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