

## Back to school – a clean start for students

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With the new school year starting in September, schools must prioritise hygiene strategies to help prevent illness and maintain a healthy learning environment. In preparation for this, Joanne Gilliard, CEO of [Jangro](#), shares her insights with us about what schools should focus on.

Joanne said: “The return to school always coincides with the start of flu season, when viruses can survive on shared surfaces like desks, taps, door handles and classroom equipment for up to 48 hours. Without strong, proactive strategies in place, these environments can quickly become breeding grounds for infection, leading to increased pupil and staff absenteeism, disrupted learning and added strain on resources and facilities teams.

“Given how much time children and staff spend in school, it’s crucial to not only maintain high cleaning standards but also to teach children the importance of good hygiene from a young age. Instilling simple habits, like regular handwashing, using tissues correctly and respecting shared spaces, can have a lifelong impact on their wellbeing and the health of those around them. Visual aids such as colourful posters and handwashing guides can help reinforce these messages in a way that’s accessible and engaging for children.

“Schools should consider the likes of strategic placement of hand sanitising stations, especially at entrances, exits and communal areas like canteens and libraries to reduce germ transmission throughout the day. Reviewing and, where necessary, increasing the frequency of cleaning for high-touch areas during peak illness periods is also key and partnering with trained operatives helps ensure consistency. Simple measures like opening windows and using air purifiers to help airflow, and ensuring soap, tissues and sanitiser dispensers are always stocked and maintained are equally essential.

“By encouraging hygienic behaviours early on among students, alongside regular disinfection of high-

touch areas and the support of trained cleaning teams, schools can create a culture of care and responsibility.”