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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
4440	14.12.2017	14.12.2017	Mumbai Maharashtra	www.thehindu.com/English http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/35-kids-fall-ill-after-khichdi-at-school/article21616864.ece
Title:	35 kids fell ill eating khichdi served at school under the mid-day meal scheme in Mumbai, Maharashtra			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Mumabi, SSU-Maharashtra			

Thirty-five Class-V and -VII students of the government-aided Bal Vikas School in Jogeshwari were hospitalised on Wednesday after eating *khichdi* served at school under the mid-day meal scheme. Officials said the children began showing signs of food poisoning after lunch, and were taken to Kokan Hospital. Three students were moved to the Trauma Hospital in Jogeshwari due to a lack of beds.

Following the incident, the Ratnagiri Jillah Maratha Dnyati Samaj, which runs the school, decided to stop serving mid-day meals from Thursday until further notice. School authorities said the food was prepared in the central kitchen and brought to the school, as per usual practice. The children sat down for lunch at 10.30 a.m. Within an hour, most were complaining of severe stomach ache, while some suffered from nausea.

School authorities said Bal Vikas has been providing mid-day meals to students for eight years, but this is the first time that students took ill. The meals are prepared by the Chafai Mahila Sanstha, a Bhandup-based women's self-help group. The organisation has been delivering meals for the past two years to the school. The *khichdi* is served to around 600 students in Classes I to VIII every day.

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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Foul-smelling *khichdi*

Several students said they had complained about the *khichdi* smelling bad to teachers when lunch was served, but were told to eat it all up. "The food was smelling bad and was very sticky. We complained, but the teacher forced us to eat," Anil Pawar, a Class V student, said. His classmate Kunal Gitesh added, "They don't allow us to bring food from home; we're forced to eat what they serve. Only *khichdi* is served, and nothing else." In fact, Kunal was heard demanding food repeatedly at the hospital as he was hungry.

Worried parents waited outside as the children remained admitted to hospital for over five hours. Supriya Selvi, a parent, said a friend called to say children at school were falling ill. She was stopped from meeting her child by doctors, but spoke to him briefly via video call. Kamala More, whose child is in Class VII, said students were served only *khichdi*.

Local corporator Anant Bhiku Nar said, "I was shocked when I heard about the incident. I will take strict action against the school," he said. Mr. Nar said he will involve the Mayor, Health Minister and government officials to bring those at fault to book. He said the school will take care of the students' medical expenses.

According to Ms. Selvi, the school principal had claimed teachers had tasted the food before serving it to students. "Then why isn't any teacher ill? Why aren't there any teachers at the hospital?"

The principal and teachers were unavailable for comment. Sangeetha Pendekar, secretary, Chafai Mahila Sevai Sahakari Sanstha, too was not reachable for comment. Kokan Hospital authorities said, "The kids are doing fine and will be discharged soon. It's a police case and there are certain formalities." Fifteen children admitted were discharged by 7.45 p.m. on Wednesday.

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