

When to Keep Your Child Home from School

It can often be difficult to decide if your child should be kept home from school when showing signs of illness. The following guidelines should assist you with your decision making.

These symptoms or illnesses should always warrant exclusion:

1. Fever, or fever within the past 24 hours:

This includes a fever that requires control with medication such as Tylenol (paracetamol or acetaminophen), Advil (ibuprofen). The presence of fever often marks the onset of an infectious illness. Many illnesses are at their most infectious before other symptoms appear, thus children should not be sent to school if their temperature falls outside of the normal range, until the nature of the illness has been determined.

(A normal temperature is considered to be within the ranges of 36.5-37.2 Centigrade or 97.7-99.0 Fahrenheit.)

- Aspirin should not be given to control fever in children under the age of 12, unless directed by a physician, because of the associated risk of Reye's syndrome.

2. Diarrhoea and /or vomiting, or within the past 24 hours:

Although very common in childhood and as a result of many different causes, please keep your child home until symptom free for 24 hours. Gastrointestinal infections are very easily spread amongst children and can cause significant dehydration in some individual cases.

Symptoms of dehydration are decreased and dark colored urine output, sunken eyes, dried lips and tongue, no tears, listlessness and lethargy.

*Medical treatment should be sought if the vomiting /diarrhea is accompanied with fever, bloody stools or vomit, severe abdominal pain, projectile vomiting, or signs of dehydration present.

3. Any condition that may be contagious:

- **Conjunctivitis (pink eye)** – until treatment has been underway for 24 hours (if indicated) or a note to say it is not considered contagious.
- **Impetigo**- a skin infection characterized by honey colored crusts, especially common around mouth, nose arms and legs. Treatment required for 24 hours before return to school.
- **Body rash with fever** – please seek medical advice to determine cause.
- **Head lice** – may return after treatment started.
- **Coughing and /or very runny nose**- if cough is severe, uncontrolled and productive (sputum being produced) medical advice should be sought.
- **Ringworm** – a ring shaped fungal skin lesion, characterized by dry, scaly, red circular lesions often with a clear centre. May be on scalp. Successful treatment should be underway before return to school. Lesions should be covered until healed.