

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING CHILDREN HOME FROM SCHOOL DUE TO ILLNESS

It is sometimes difficult to decide when and how long to keep an ill child home from school. The following guidelines represent the more common childhood illnesses.

CHICKEN POX: A skin rash consisting of small blisters, which leave scabs. A slight fever may or may not be present. There may be blisters and scabs all present at the same time. Your child should remain home until all blisters have scabbed over, usually 5-7 days after the appearance of the first crop of blisters.

COMMON COLD: Irritated throat, watery discharge from the nose and eyes, sneezing, chills and general body discomfort. Your child should remain home if symptoms are serious enough to interfere with your child's ability to learn. Medical care should be obtained if symptoms persist beyond 7-10 days, fever develops, or discharge becomes yellow to green.

FEVER: If your child's temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater (or 1 or 2 degrees above the child's normal temperature) (s)he should remain home until (s)he has been without fever for a full 24 hours. Remember fever is a symptom indicating the presence of an illness.

FLU: Abrupt onset of fever, chills, headache and sore muscles. Runny nose, sore throat, and cough are common. Your child should remain home from school until symptoms are gone and the child is without fever for 24 hours.

HEAD LICE: Lice are small grayish-tan, wingless insects that lay eggs called nits. Nits are firmly attached to the hair shafts, close to the scalp. Nits are much easier to see and detect than lice. They are small white specks, which are usually found at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Following lice infestation, your child may return to school after receiving treatment with a pediculicide shampoo.

PAIN: If your child complains, or behavior indicates, that (s)he is experiencing persistent pain, (s)he should be evaluated by a physician before your child is sent to school.

PINKEYE: Redness and swelling of the membranes of the eye with burning or itching, yellow or green drainage coming from one or both eyes, or crusts on the eyelids. Your child should remain home from school until receiving 24 hours of antibiotic therapy, as determined by your physician, and discharge from the eyes has stopped.

SKIN RASHES: A physician should evaluate skin rashes of unknown origin before your child is sent to school.

STREP THROAT AND SCARLET FEVER: Strep throat usually begins with fever, sore and red throat, possibly pus spots on the back of the throat, tender swollen glands of the neck. With scarlet fever there are all the symptoms of strep throat as well as a strawberry appearance to the tongue and rash of the skin. High fever, nausea and vomiting may also occur. Your child should remain home from school until receiving a full 24 hours of antibiotic therapy and until without fever or vomiting for 24 hours. Most physicians will advise rest at home 1-2 days after a strep infection.

VOMITING AND DIARRHEA (INTESTINAL VIRAL INFECTIONS): Stomach ache, cramping, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, possible fever, headache, and body aches. Your child should remain at home until without vomiting, diarrhea or fever for a full 24 hours. If your child has had any of these symptoms during the night, (s)he should not be sent to school the following day.