

Guidelines For Keeping Sick Children Home

Each day many parents are faced with a decision. Do I send my child to school or keep him/her home? Often the way a child looks and acts can make the decision an obvious one. We have provided the following guidelines to assist you.

1. **"I don't feel well."** Take a really good look at your child. Does your child appear flushed or feverish? pale or ashen in color? eyes dull or red? Does he/she appear weak, listless, or overly tired? no appetite? If so, then it is best that your child stay at home.

2. **Fever.** Your child must stay home if there is a fever of 100 degrees or higher. It is not uncommon for the fever to increase as the day goes on. Then, it would be necessary for him/her to be sent home from school anyway. Another guideline to follow: **make sure your child is fever-free (without the aid of Tylenol or Advil) for 24 hours before returning to school.**

3. **Pain.** Pain (ear, throat, head, stomach, etc.) that is chronic or severe enough to affect school performance should be evaluated by a physician. Strep throat and some other infections **require antibiotic therapy for 24 hours before returning to school.**

4. **Vomiting/Diarrhea.** Keep them home, please! Vomiting and/or diarrhea are not considered normal. They are usually an indication that your child is ill. Keep him/her home until free of these symptoms for at least 24 hours after the last episode.

5. **Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye).** Pink or red whites of the eye with white or yellow discharge, which causes matting of the eyelids, can be highly contagious. Check with your physician about treatment and **keep your child home for 24 hours after the treatment has started.**

(MORE ON THE BACK!)

6. **Coughing.** A persistent and uncontrolled cough that cannot be quieted with cough drops or medication is another reason to keep your child home. Besides the possibility of spreading germs, it is a constant distraction and irritation for the rest of the class.

7. **Runny nose, head/chest congestion.** Cold symptoms (with or without a cough) can indicate a severe upper respiratory infection, bronchitis, flu, or even pneumonia. A "cold" with mild to moderate symptoms is no reason to miss school. But if you notice difficulty breathing, dehydration, fever, prolonged or more severe symptoms, see your physician.

8. **Rashes, blisters, sores.** Keep your child home for any unusual or unexplained rashes, blisters, or sores until a medical exam indicates the rash is not a communicable disease such as chicken pox, impetigo, staph/strep infection, etc.

9. **Miraculous recoveries.** Physical complaints that quickly 'disappear' once a decision is made for the child to stay home may suggest that there is some emotional cause behind the 'illness'. Talk to your child and try to sort out fears, misunderstandings, or problems at school. Communicate with your child's teacher and work together to find a solution.

These guidelines are important for several reasons:

We must protect the health of our staff and students!

Some of our students have weakened immune systems and become ill easily.

Staying home allows the child an opportunity to rest and recover, preventing a relapse or lingering illness.

A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in class in a meaningful way. Many times the ill child disrupts the rest of the class with a chronic cough, persistent nose blowing, complaints of not feeling well, and frequent trips to the restroom.