

GENERAL 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 timing of the absence is often important in order to decrease the spread of disease to others, and to prevent your child from acquiring any other illness while his/her resistance is lowered. The following guidelines represent the more common childhood illnesses and the usual recommendations of the School Nursing Services.

CHICKEN POX A skin rash consisting of small blisters that 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, chilliness 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 or greater (or 1 or 2 degrees above the child's normal temperature) he/she should remain home until he/she 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 without fever-reducing medications.

IMPETIGO Blister-like lesions that later develop into crusted pus-like sores. Your child should remain home from school until receiving 48 hours of antibiotic therapy and sores are no longer draining.

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

PINK EYE Redness and swelling of the membranes of the eye with burning or itching, discharge 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 and discharge from the eyes has stopped. The spread of infection can be minimized by keeping the hands away from the face, good hand washing practices, using individual washcloths and towels and NOT touching any part of the eyes with the tip of the medication applicator while administering the antibiotic ointment.

SKIN RASHES Skin rashes of unknown origin accompanied by fever should be evaluated by a physician before your child goes to school.

STAPH INFECTIONS May return after 24 hours of treatment and all open sores covered with a bandage.

STREP THROAT AND SCARLET FEVER Strep throat begins with fever, sore and red throat, 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 they are without fever or vomiting for 24 hours. Most physicians will advise rest at home 1-2 days after a strep infection. Antibiotics ordered for strep infections are to be taken for 10 days or until all medication is gone. Only when these directions are followed correctly is the strep germ completely eliminated from the body, no matter how well the child feels after the first few days of receiving medication.

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 they are without vomiting, diarrhea or fever for a full 24 hours without medication. If your child has had any of these symptoms during the night he/she should NOT be sent to school the following day:

RINGWORM Must be under treatment and the area covered to participate at school.

UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTION Children with mild cases may remain in school even if it is associated with green or yellow nasal discharge, as long as the child does not have a fever. If the child has a persistent cough lasting more than 5 days or with a fever, a more serious illness may be present and requires a physician evaluation before returning to school.

CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN FOR THE MOST ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT