

# *Tips from the School Health Office*



## WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME WITH ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

Sometimes it can be difficult for a parent to decide whether to send children to school when they wake up with early symptoms of an illness or complaints that they do not feel well. In general, during cold and flu season, unless your child is significantly ill, the best place for them is in school. Remind and show your children to discard used tissues promptly, not to share personal items, to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, to keep their hands away from their face, and to wash hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water. However, there are some situations in which it is best to plan on keeping your child home for a day to rest or to arrange for an appointment with your health care provider.

Our district policy states that you should not send your child to school if he/she has:

- Fever greater than 100° orally, including a fever that requires control with medication, like Tylenol. **Child must remain home until fever free for 24 hours.**
- Child is too sleepy or ill from an illness, like vomiting and/or diarrhea, to profit from sitting in class all day. **Child must remain home until 24 hours vomit and diarrhea free.**
- Significant cough that makes a child feel uncomfortable or disrupts the class.
- Sore throat accompanied by fever and/or feeling ill, that persists longer than 48 hours, OR after known exposure to a confirmed case of Streptococcal throat infection or other known infections. **Please note that if your child has a confirmed case of Strep Throat, he/she must taking antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school. A doctor's note should accompany your child upon return.**
- Honey-crusted sores around the nose or mouth or rash on other body parts that might be impetigo; OR a rash in various stages including boils, sores, hives and bumps that may be chicken pox; OR a significant rash accompanied by other symptoms of illness such as fever. The school nurse may ask for a doctor's note stating that child may return to school and is not contagious.
- Red eyes, severe cold symptoms and runny nose that distract the child from learning.
- Discolored nasal discharge, continuous runny nose especially if accompanied by facial pain, fever or headache.
- Ear pain or drainage from the ear.
- Severe headache, especially if accompanied by fever.

If your child becomes ill at school and the teacher or school nurse feels that the child is too sick to benefit from school or may be contagious to other children, you will be called to come and take him/her home from school. **It is essential that the main office has a current phone number where you can be contacted during the day and an emergency number in the event you cannot be reached. Please make sure that arrangements can be made to transport your child home from school and that childcare is available in case of illness.**



Finally, if you know your child is still running a fever, it is not a good idea simply to give them Tylenol and send them to school because as soon as the medicine wears off, you are apt to get the dreaded call from the school nurse to leave work and come to pick up your feverish child. It is better to let them stay home in bed with a fever and take their medications at home until they are off all medicines and ready to learn for a full day in a classroom. If you find a pattern of your child asking to stay home from school, especially if they are falling behind or appear anxious by the thought of attending school, or if there does not appear to any obvious physical symptoms, it may be a good idea to contact the school nurse, teacher and/or your health care provider to discuss your concerns. Remember, whenever you keep your child home from school, please call the main office in advance of the start of the school day and leave a message that your child will be absent.

**\*If your child is absent for more than 3 days, a doctor's note is required upon return to school.**

Thank You  
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