

I DON'T FEEL VERY WELL



A GUIDE ON HOW TO DECIDE IF YOUR CHILD IS
WELL ENOUGH TO GO TO SCHOOL.



TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

T: 0121 378 1288

FOR ATTENDANCE OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

As a parent you want your child to always be feeling their best for school and when they are not feeling very well it can be confusing to decide whether they should go to school or not.

This guide will help you understand what illnesses you should keep your child home from school for and what actions you should take so that your child feels better and communication with the school is effective.

When it comes to your child's health, it is always better to be safe than sorry. If you are ever in doubt about your child's health, talk to a health professional. Serious childhood illnesses are extremely rare. But, if you think your child might be affected, always trust your instincts and get help from a health professional straight away.

Whenever your child is away from school ill, it is important to inform their school. On the first day of your child's illness, telephone the school to tell them that your child will be staying at home. The school may ask about the nature of the illness and how long you expect the absence to last.

If it becomes clear that your child will be away for longer than expected, phone the school as soon as possible to explain this and provide any medical evidence of doctors appointments that your child has attended whilst they have been off.

If your child becomes ill or too ill to remain in school, the school's First Aider will make the decision and call the parent/carer of the child so that can be collected. The Attendance Officer will then code the child as ill.



COLDS

SELF CARE TIP

CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to cough or sneeze.

BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

Regular hand washing with soap and water is the best way to stop the spread of viruses and bacteria.

It is normal for children to have eight or more colds a year, this is because there are hundreds of different cold viruses and young children have no immunity to any of them as they have never had them before. Gradually children build up their natural defences and will get fewer colds.

There are some good things about children catching a few colds and coughs. Most bugs will run their course without doing any real harm because they are viruses which get better on their own, however there are things you can do at home to help:

- Give your child more to drink than normal.
- You can give your child, the guided and suggested dose of paracetamol and ibuprofen to bring down their temperature, reduce pain and discomfort. There are special products for children. It will state on the packet how much you should give children of different ages.
- The school's First Aider is able to hand out paracetamol and other tablets as long as the following has taken place:
 - tablets are handed to reception in the correct medicine box with the child's full name and date of birth clearly written on the box.
 - A green medicinal form should be completed by a parent/carer. Please see reception staff for a green medical form.



PLEASE SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

COUGHS AND SORE THROATS

Children often cough when they have a cold because of mucus trickling down the back of the throat. Although it is upsetting to hear your child cough, coughing helps clear away this mucus. If your child is drinking, eating and breathing normally and there's no wheezing, a cough is not usually anything to worry about and should not be a reason why your child cannot attend school.

- Warm drinks with lemon and honey can help soothe sore throats and reduce coughing
- Visit your local pharmacy who will be able to tell you what cough medicines will be suitable for your child.

If your child has a bad cough that will not go away see your GP, out of hours where possible. If your child also has a high temperature and is breathless, they may have a chest infection. If this is caused by bacteria rather than a virus your GP will prescribe antibiotics to clear up the infection. Antibiotics will not soothe or stop the cough straightaway.

If a cough continues for a long time especially if it is worse at night or is brought on by your child running about, it could be a sign of asthma. Some children with asthma also have a wheeze or breathlessness. If your child has any of these symptoms make an appointment with your GP.



EMERGENCY + DEPARTMENT TIP

Remember if your child seems to have trouble breathing, make sure you get help from a health professional straight away.

DID YOU KNOW?

Having a sore throat is your body's way of defending itself. The immune response can mean inflamed glands which can be painful when swallowing. This is usually normal with a cough and cold.



**PLEASE SEND YOUR
CHILD TO SCHOOL**



BEING SICK AND DIARRHOEA

There are many reasons why your child may be sick or have diarrhoea, they may have eaten or drunk something that does not agree with them or have picked up a stomach bug.

There are some simple tips you should follow if your child is sick or has diarrhoea:

- May take 24-48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Give your child lots of clear drinks to replace the fluid that has been lost.
- Only give them food if they want it and try to give them foods which are easy to digest such as plain toast.
- Your local pharmacist can advise you about oral rehydration treatments.
- You can help to prevent any infection spreading by using separate towels for your child and reminding everyone in the family to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

Make sure you contact your GP urgently if:

- There is blood in your child's diarrhoea.
- Your child has diarrhoea and is being sick at the same time.
- Your child has diarrhoea that is particularly watery, has blood in it or lasts longer than two or three days.
- Your child has a severe or continuous stomach ache.



Keep your child off school until 24 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.



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TONSILLITIS

The main symptom of tonsillitis is a sore throat. There may be several other symptoms such as:

- Coughing
- Headaches
- Pain when swallowing
- High temperature (fever) over 38oC (100.4oF)
- Tiredness
- Pain in ears or neck
- White pus-filled on tonsils
- Swollen lymph nodes (glands) in the neck.

Your GP will advise you on how to treat the symptoms of tonsillitis, what treatment your child needs and how long they should be off school.

Please contact the Attendance Officer by 8:35am to inform them of the situation.

We advise you to take your child to the GP. Please obtain your medical appointment card and show this to the Attendance Officer on your child's return to school.



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IMPETIGO

Impetigo is a highly contagious bacterial infection of the surface layers of the skin, which causes sores and blisters.

Impetigo is not usually a serious condition. However, you should take precautions to avoid spreading it to other people, particularly if your child attends school. If your child has Impetigo make sure all your family carefully wash their hands after touching affected areas of skin, and do not share towels or bed linen.

TREATING IMPETIGO

If you suspect your child has impetigo please make an appointment to see your GP. Antibiotic creams are usually recommended to treat the impetigo infection and minimise the risk of it spreading. Most children are no longer contagious after 48 hours of treatment.

Please take your child to see your GP.

Please contact the Attendance officer by 8:35am informing them that your child will not be in school.

Please obtain your medical appointment card and show this to the Attendance officer on your child's return to school.



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CHICKENPOX

Chickenpox is a mild condition that most children catch at some point. It takes 10 to 21 days for the signs to show. If you are sure it is Chickenpox you do not need to go to your GP unless your child is very unwell. Chickenpox is most common in children who are between two and eight years old. Your child is also more likely to catch chickenpox in winter and spring, particularly between March and May.

Chickenpox can be passed on to others from about two days before the rash appears until roughly five days after. The rash usually appears on the chest and back. You and your child should stay away from other people until all of the blisters have fully burst and dried, which usually happens five or seven days after the first blister appears.

After the last blister has burst and dried, they are no longer likely to pass the infection on, and are able to return to school.

Chickenpox spreads from spit, sneezes and coughs from a person who has Chickenpox.

You must inform the school if your child does contract Chickenpox.



TIP

Speak to your local pharmacy about treatment which can help to calm itching (especially at night) to help stop the blisters scarring



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MEASLES

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness. It causes a range of symptoms including a fever, coughing and distinctive red-brown spots on the skin.

The most effective way of preventing measles is the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Measles is most common among children aged between one and four years old, although anyone who has not been vaccinated against measles can catch it.

Treatment for measles is normally not necessary as the body's immune system can usually fight off the infection in a couple of weeks. Typically, once you have fought off the measles infection, you develop immunity (resistance) to it. However, possible complications of measles include pneumonia, ear and eye infections and croup (an infection of the lungs and throat). More serious complications, such as inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), are rare but can be fatal.

For more information about measles and vaccinations please contact your GP.

MEDICAL TIP

If you think your child has measles contact your GP who can advise you on how long your child should be away from school and what treatments your child will need. Your GP can tell you what signs to look out for as your child gets better and when your child will feel well enough to go back to school.

Please contact school and provide medical evidence on their return.



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MUMPS

Mumps is a very contagious viral infection that usually affects children. The most common symptom of mumps is a swelling of the parotid glands. The parotid glands are located on one side, or both sides, of the face. The swelling gives a person a distinctive 'hamster face' appearance.

Once a person has had mumps, they usually develop immunity against further infections. People who are infected are most contagious for one to two days before the onset of symptoms, and for five days afterwards. During this time, it is important to prevent spreading the infection to other people, particularly those at high risk of developing complications. For example:

- Teenagers and young adults who have not been vaccinated
- Pregnant staff at your child's school.

The mumps virus is spread in the same way as the common cold and flu viruses. The most effective way to prevent mumps is to have the MMR vaccination. For young children with mumps the symptoms should pass within two weeks without causing any long-term problems. For teenagers and adults with mumps they can have a higher risk of developing complications, some of which can be serious.

As there is currently no cure for mumps, treatment is aimed at relieving the symptoms and preventing the further spread of infection.



MEDICAL TIP

Contact your GP if you think your child has mumps. Your GP can advise you on how long your child should be away from school and what treatments will help your child feel better.

Please contact school and provide medical evidence on their return.



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MEDICAL TIP

If you think your child has measles contact your GP who can advise you on how long your child should be away from school and what treatments your child will need. Your GP can tell you what signs to look out for as your child gets better and when your child will feel well enough to go back to school.

DID YOU KNOW

Other ways to treat the symptoms of scarlet fever include:

- give your child plenty of cool fluids, especially if they do not have much of an appetite
- keep their room cool
- you can give your child paracetamol to relieve aches and pains and bring down a high temperature
- you can apply calamine lotion to relieve itching of the rash.



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SCARLET FEVER

Scarlet fever is a bacterial illness that causes a distinctive pink-red rash.

The main symptom of scarlet fever is a widespread, fine pink-red that feels like sandpaper to touch. It may start in one area, but soon spreads to many parts of the body, such as the ears, neck and chest. The rash may be itchy.

If your child has scarlet fever they will develop a flushed, red face - hence the name scarlet fever - although the skin around the mouth stays white. The tongue may look a bit like a strawberry. Other symptoms include swollen neck glands, especially if you generally feel unwell. Symptoms usually develop one to four days after a person is infected. Scarlet fever usually follows a sore throat or impetigo that is caused by particular strains of bacteria.

Scarlet fever is very contagious and usually affects children aged four to eight years old. Because it is so contagious, scarlet fever is likely to affect someone who is in close contact with a person with a sore throat or impetigo that is caused by bacteria.

Your child should stay at home until they have been cleared by the GP to come into school

SLAPPED CHEEK SYNDROME

Slapped cheek syndrome is a common childhood viral infection which usually affects children who are between 3-15 years old. It is most common during the late winter months or early spring. The most common symptom of slapped cheek syndrome is the appearance of a bright red rash on both cheeks, along with a high temperature, headaches, joint pain and a sore throat.

In children slapped cheek syndrome is a mild, self-limiting infection, which means that it will get better by itself without the need for treatment, although the school must be informed if you child does have it.



MEDICAL TIP

You can give your child painkillers, such as paracetamol, or ibuprofen to help relieve symptoms, such as a high temperature, headache, and joint pain. Antihistamines can be used to relieve the symptoms of itchy skin. You can also make sure that your child gets plenty of rest and drinks plenty of fluids as this will help to relieve the symptoms of a sore throat and a high temperature.



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MENINGITIS

KNOW THE SIGNS OF MENINGITIS:

Bacterial meningitis has a number of early warning signs that can occur earlier than the other symptoms. These are:

- pain the muscles, joints or limbs, such as in the leg or hands
- unusually cold hands and feet, or shivering
- pale or blotchy skin and blue lips.

Meningitis causes symptoms such as:

- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- High temperature (fever of 38°C or over)
- Stiff neck
- Sensitivity to light
- Red or purple spots that don't fade under pressure (do the glass test (explained on the next page)
- Rapid or unusual patterns of breathing.

Meningitis is a very serious illness, but if it is diagnosed and treated early most children make a full recovery. There are several types of meningitis and some can be prevented by vaccinations (speak to your Health Visitor or GP for more information).



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Early symptoms of meningitis may be similar to a cold or flu (fever, vomiting, irritability and restlessness). However, children with meningitis can become seriously ill in hours, so make sure can recognise the signs.

Not all children will develop all the symptoms listed. If your child develops some of these symptoms, especially red or purple spots, get medical help urgently.

If you cannot get in touch with your GP, or are still worried after you have spoken to them, take your child to the Emergency Department.

PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.

If your child develops some of these symptoms, especially red or purple spots, get medical help urgently.

- FEVER, COLD HANDS & FEET
- VOMITING
- DROWSY, DIFFICULT TO WAKE
- CONFUSION AND IRRITABILITY
- SEVERE MUSCLE PAIN
- PALE BLOTCHY SKIN. SPOT/RASH, SEE GLASS TEST
- SEVERE HEADACHE
- STIFF NECK
- DISLIKE BRIGHT LIGHTS
- CONVULSIONS/SIEZURES



MEDCAL ADVICE

T: 111

EMERGENCIES

T: 999

ANXIETY OR FEELING WORRIED

Homework, exams and fall outs with friends can all make your child feel stressed and anxious. Anxiety and stress are normal healthy reactions to everyday life and happen to everyone at times of danger or in worrying situations.

Anxiety and worry can become a problem when they interfere with your child's everyday life. Children who experience worry may be irritable, not sleep well, lose interest in food, worry a lot or appear depressed.

Anxiety and worry can be broken down into three components:

- **Physical** - The physical symptoms we experience in our body, such as an increased heart rate, sweating and a dry mouth. These are all normal but can be very frightening (some children think they are having a heart attack, or might be sick). It is important to explain that these symptoms as part of our natural fight or flight response.
- **Thoughts** - The internal messages we say to ourselves. Worrying situations can make us think 'I am not going to cope', 'I cannot do this' or 'I am rubbish.' Often these messages can get the better of us, but we need to challenge them and replace them with more coping self talk 'I will try', 'It will be ok' and 'I can always seek help.'
- **Behaviour** - What we do. The ways we cope with anxiety or stress. This may include avoiding things, becoming aggressive, running away and alcohol and drug misuse.

There are a number of things you can do to help your child feel better if they are feeling stressed or anxious:

- **Ensure your child eats well** - a balanced diet is vital for your child's health, and can help them to feel better during stress time. Some parents find that too many high-fat, high-sugar and high-caffeine foods and drinks (such as cola, sweets, chocolate, burgers and chips) make their children hyperactive, irritable and moody.
- **Encourage sleep** - good sleep will improve your child's thinking and concentration. Allow half an hour or so for your child to wind down between studying. They might want to try reading a book for 30 minutes before bed to help them get a good night's sleep.
- **Discuss stress and anxiety** - remind your child that feeling nervous is normal.
- **Encourage exercise** - make sure your child is active. Exercise can help boost energy levels, clear the mind and relieve stress. Walking, cycling, swimming, football and dancing are all effective.

WHAT TO DO

If you are concerned about your child's stress and anxiety levels make sure talk to your child's Head of Year or Form Tutor so they can help to support your child and they feel confident to attend school.

MEDICAL TIP

Whilst stress and anxiety are normal, if you are concerned about your child and think they are having serious problems please book an appointment with your GP. There is lots of support available.

UNDERSTANDING WHY YOUR CHILD MAY SAY THEY ARE TOO ILL TO GO TO SCHOOL

Sometimes your child may tell you they are ill when really there is something else going on which is making them not want to go. Make sure you take time to talk to your child, listen to how they are feeling and offer reassurance if they are worried or upset.

Sometimes children do not want to go to school for reasons other than being unwell, these could include your child saying:

- My friend is off today
- I do not want to walk to school by myself
- Person x is being horrible to me
- I do not like the work we have to do today
- I have not done my homework so I will get told off
- I do not want to do my detention
- I do not need to learn what we are learning today
- The work is too hard or too easy.

The best thing to do is talk to a member of staff at school and let them know the problems your child is experiencing. Together you can agree the best way to support your child so that they feel confident to attend school.



T: 0121 378 1288 FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

TOP TIPS

WHEN NOT TO SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

Most of the time it is perfectly acceptable to send your child to school if they are just a little 'under the weather', suffering from a runny nose or sore throat. Most of the time you can rely on your own instinct as a parent and common sense but it is helpful to know when you really **MUST NOT** send your child to school.

When deciding if your child is well enough to go to school ask yourself the following questions:

- Is your child well enough to attend lessons?
- Does your child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?
- Would you take a day off work if you had this condition?

WHEN **NOT** TO SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL:

- If your child has a high **temperature** (over 38°C).
- If your child has **vomiting and diarrhoea**. You can send your child back to school 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- If your child has **tonsillitis**. Your child's GP will tell you how long your child should be kept at home.
- If your child has **impetigo**. Your child can only attend school after having received treatment for at least 48 hours.
- If your child has **chickenpox**. Your child can go back to school when all blisters have fully burst and dried.
- If your child has **measles**. Your child's GP will tell you how long your child should be kept at home.
- If your child has **mumps**. Your child's GP will tell you how long your child should be kept at home.
- If your child has **scarlet fever**. Your child's GP will tell you how long your child should be kept at home.
- If your child has **slapped cheek syndrome**. Your child's GP will tell you how long your child should be kept at home.

Remember, school will always send your child home if they consider them too ill to attend. To ensure that school can contact you should there be an emergency please make sure that your contact details are up to date.



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TOP TIPS

- Tell your child's school, if your child has a medical condition or needs to take medicine - even if it is for a short time.
- Make sure that any medication your child needs at school is labelled with your child's full name and how often it should be taken. Make sure you discuss the medication with a school First Aider and that a consent form is completed.
- Make sure that any medication is within the expiry date.
- Ensure that your child catches up on any school work they have missed if they have had time off with illness.
- Provide school with any medical evidence to ensure accurate attendance marks can be obtained.



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NON EMERGENCY
T: 111
EMERGENCIES
T: 999

