

## **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 illnesses 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, itchy blisters that leave scabs. There may be blisters and scabs all present at the same time. A slight fever may or may not be present. Your child should remain home until all blisters have scabbed over, usually 5-7 days after the appearance of the first crop of blisters. Even if your child has received the chicken pox vaccine, there is still a slight chance he/she may get a mild case.

**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 or greater (or 1-2 degrees above the child's normal temperature) he/she should remain home until he/she has been without fever for a full 24hrs. without the use of fever-reducing medications. Remember, fever is a symptom indicating the presence of an illness.

**FLU:** Abrupt onset of fever, chills, headache and body aches. Runny nose, sore throat, and cough are common. Your child should remain at home until symptoms are gone and the child is without fever for 24hrs.

**HEAD LICE:** Lice are small grayish-tan, wingless insects that lay eggs called nits. Nits are much easier to see and detect than lice. They are small white or gray, teardrop-shaped specks which are firmly attached to the hair shaft. They are usually found at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and at the crown of the head. Your child should be treated with a lice-killing shampoo, and nits removed. Instructions on how to properly treat head lice are available at the school. These instructions should be followed carefully to eliminate possible re-infestation and to minimize your child's absence from school.

**IMPETIGO:** Blister-like lesions that later develop into crusted pus-like sores, most commonly located around the nose and mouth. Your child should remain home from school until receiving 24hrs of antibiotic therapy and sores are no longer draining.

**PAIN:** If your child complains of, or behavior indicates that he/she is experiencing persistent pain, he/she should be evaluated by a health care provider before being sent to school.

**PINKEYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS):** A viral or bacterial infection of the eye causing redness and swelling of the membranes of the eye, burning or itching, watery or thick drainage, or crusting on the eyelids. Exposure to allergens can also cause similar but noncontagious symptoms. If your child is prescribed antibiotic eye drops he/she should remain home from school until receiving 24hrs of treatment and discharge from the eye has stopped.

**RINGWORM:** A fungal infection that causes a flat, red, ring-shaped rash which may itch or burn. Your child should remain at home until receiving 24hrs of anti-fungal treatment.

**SKIN RASHES:** Skin rashes of unknown origin should be evaluated by a physician before your child goes to school. Assuming that a rash is not contagious can lead to the spread of the condition to others.

**STREP THROAT:** Strep throat usually begins with fever, sore and red throat, pus spots on the back of the throat, and tender, swollen glands of the neck. Nausea and vomiting may also occur. Your child should remain home from school until receiving a full 24hrs of antibiotic therapy and until without fever or vomiting for 24hrs. Most physicians will advise rest at home for 1-2 days after a strep infection.

**VOMITING AND DIARRHEA (INTESTINAL 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 24hrs. If your child has had vomiting, diarrhea or fever during the night he/she should not be sent to school the following day.

**CONSULT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS**