

When to Keep Your Child Home from School

It's hard sometimes to decide whether to send your children to school when they don't feel well. And illness is very seldom convenient! As busy parents, you have to consider work schedules, childcare arrangements, transportation and other family matters in that decision, and of course, you want what is best for your child's health.

It's also not easy to achieve a balance between reinforcing the importance of being at school and having the best attendance possible, and making a good parent decision that your child will not be able to be "in attention" at school today because of illness. That's especially hard when you have those great "high-achievers" who don't want to miss a day and lose that perfect attendance record. But balance is what being a good parent is all about!

We feel very strongly at Argyle ISD that good attendance is extremely important to your child's success at school! They must be here to learn. There are **also** important health reasons for keeping your child home from school, so here are some helpful guidelines to consider when you hear those words, *"I feel sick; I don't want to go to school today."*

The guidelines are standards of practice for the AISD health services department; they were approved by our school board as policy (FFAC Local).

[http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/061901/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=FFAC\(LOCAL\).html&QueryText=MEDICATIONS](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/061901/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=FFAC(LOCAL).html&QueryText=MEDICATIONS)

The guidelines were developed from Texas laws requiring exclusion for contagious diseases that could be spread at school, and must be enforced for the comfort and safety of all our students.

Children who have the following symptoms should stay home and not come to school until these symptoms have been gone for at least 24 hours *without the help of medication*, or until your doctor sends a note that states the condition is not contagious and it is OK for your child to come back to school.



- **FEVER** - check your child's temperature with a thermometer, and if a fever over 100 degrees is present, don't send him or her to school, even for just a little while in the morning so that they can have "perfect attendance." Responsible attendance is more important than perfect attendance in the long run, and parents who use common sense and make

healthy decisions about keeping their children home are the ones who should get the attendance rewards!

It doesn't help your child's health to give medicine for fever and send them on to school...that only **reduces the fever for a short time, and doesn't take care of the illness that is causing the fever.** Coming to school sick (and possibly contagious) not only exposes other children to the illness, but also delays your child's healing time. Once the medicine wears off and the fever returns, your child must be picked up anyway, and valuable healing time has been lost. **Children must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of medicine, before returning to school.**

- **VOMITING/DIARRHEA** - If the vomiting or diarrhea happens more than once that day, or if they are associated with fever, you must keep your child home. If these things happen only one time before school starts, and your child feels better immediately afterwards, your child may attend school. If the child begins to feel ill or the symptoms recur the child will need to see the school nurse and will be sent home.
- **SKIN RASHES** - **Anytime a rash is associated with fever, the child may not come to school until that fever is gone for 24 hours without medication.** Sometimes a rash is a sign of a contagious disease such as chickenpox. Sometimes, rashes are not contagious, but are uncomfortable and itchy from contact with something the child is allergic to. In that case, although school is certainly a good option, please consider comfort measures such as an antihistamine, **following the district policy for medication administration at school** and discussing possible treatment with your doctor and/or the school nurse.
- **REDDISH OR PINK EYES, ESPECIALLY IF THERE IS ALSO DRAINAGE OR CRUSTING AROUND THE EYE** -this can often mean your child has *conjunctivitis*, also known as **pink-eye**. If both eyes are red and the drainage is clear with no crusting the diagnosis is most likely allergies. The student should remain at school. If the eye/eyes are red and the drainage is yellow or there is crusting the diagnosis is most likely pink eye. In this case, the student will need to see a physician's release or be symptom free to return to school.
- **PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE) OR SCABIES** - these small insects cause skin conditions that are uncomfortable and itchy, and could become infected with all the scratching. Check with the school nurse to get information on treatment and when your child may return to school if those conditions are present. We do not advocate expensive treatments or toxic chemicals!

If your child has other symptoms such as **headaches, cramps, sore throat, cough and/or thick mucous** that don't require them to be out of school but that will make them uncomfortable during class, please discuss the use of over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medications with your doctor. **Remember you must follow the district requirements for giving medicine at school.** Call the school nurse if you are not sure about those requirements.

Kids who are truly sick will heal better and faster when they have proper rest at home, with healthy nutrition and plenty of fluid for hydration. Your school nurse is available for assistance during school hours if you have questions. We will always do our best to help you make a good decision based on our experience and knowledge as registered nurses, after considering the potential for spreading infections at school and what is in all the children's best interests. **We have common goals with you- the health, safety, and school success of your child!**
Thanks

Remember if your child is ill and is unable to attend school, please send a written note including your child's name, and a short explanation of your child's illness.