

Hawk Health News

March, 2024

Health Protocol Review

Topic: IS YOUR STUDENT TOO SICK TO BE AT SCHOOL?

{Link to protocol: <https://www.hellgate.k12.mt.us/departments/health-services/is-my-child-too-sick-for-school>}

About seventy-five percent of parents/guardian's report that their student has had at least one sick day each school year. But it can be difficult for parents, teachers, and school nurses to decipher if a student is "too sick to be at school". In general, we try to look for physical symptoms that would indicate an illness is present. These symptoms may be fever, pale skin color, putting head down in class, persistent/disruptive cough, tears, holding head, vomiting, ear infection, red/swollen tonsils, or diarrhea. For these straight forward cases, there is a protocol we have to follow and ask parents/guardians to follow as well. According to these protocols students are not permitted to be at school if:

- They have a **fever** of 100.5 F, are **vomiting** or have **diarrhea**, have persistent and disruptive **cough**, have a **rash** accompanied by drainage or fever, have **skin lesions/sores** that have drainage that cannot be contained by a bandage, or other symptoms that prevent a student from participating in school activities or require care the school cannot safely provide (see link to protocol on website above).

With that said, we all know students can feel sick without any of these obvious symptoms. When this happens, we have to rely on the student's reported symptoms, which can be tricky! We have to determine if the child is truly sick or could there be other reasons that are making them feel sick, or even fake sick? This could be friendship problems, bullying, anxiety, difficulties with school work, problems at home, or a number of other reasons. We also have to take into consideration if there could be a food intolerance/allergy causing illness/discomfort. If we start to see the same student reporting illness frequently, it may be time to consider thinking outside the box! At his point communication is important so we can collect data, answer questions, and ensure all parties are on the same page.

Fun Health Tidbits!

Colorblindness vs. Normal color vision



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

6th graders that are scheduled for well-child visits over this school year and summer, don't forget to get your Tdap immunization which is needed prior to entering 7th grade!

We have new AEDs on campus! Saint Patrick's Hospital graciously donated 2 new AEDs for us to have in our building 3 and 4 gymnasiums! Locate them the next time you are in those buildings so you know where to get them in case of an emergency!

Color Blind screening for kindergarten on March 6th

NUTRITION AT SCHOOL

Hydration, hydration, hydration!

Did you know that 1 in 5 children and adolescents do not drink any plain water during the day, and nearly half of school-aged children are underhydrated?

So why does hydration matter so much? Experts state that proper hydration is crucial for many reasons: it helps regulate body temperature, prevents infections, delivers nutrients to cells, keeps organs functioning properly, improves sleep, increases cognition, and improves mood and focus! Sounds like it matters a lot!

It is recommended for school aged children to consume at least 7-8 cups of water per day, and 10-16 cups for adolescents (depending on level of activity). We should also encourage plain water for proper hydration, and discourage any sugary drinks.

Each building on Hellgate campus has 3-4 filtered water stations for students to drink from and fill their water bottles. All students are encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to school every day to allow for more convenient water consumption. Students are always welcome (and encouraged) to have their water bottle with them in class. We always have extra water bottles for students that do not have one.

Let's do our part to help increase hydration at school and help set the groundwork for healthy hydration habits?



Ways to promote hydration at school:

- Parents: pack a clean water bottle in your child's backpack every day (let a teacher know if you need one).
- Teachers: remind students to bring their water bottle to class daily and take it with them from class to class.
- Teachers: have scheduled drink breaks where the entire class drinks together with the goal of an empty water bottle by the end of the day.
- Teachers: allow students to have their water bottle at their desks so they are reminded to drink often.
- Teachers: remind students to bring their water bottle with them to lunch if they are not drinking milk.
- Teachers: teach your students about the importance of proper hydration.

