

# WHEN SHOULD A CHILD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL?



Many illnesses do not require a child to stay home from school. However, the child should stay home if the illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in school activities or if there is risk of spread of harmful disease to others. Criteria include:

**1. Ill appearance:** This could include a child who is unusually tired, low energy, poor appetite, or is not themselves.

**2. Fever:** A child who is **feverish (chills, sweating) or has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher**. The child should not return until 24 hours of no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications. A child with strep throat/scarlet fever should be treated with antibiotics for 12 hours (at least 2 doses) before returning to school.

**3. Diarrhea:** A child has two loose bowel movements, even if there are no other signs of illness. The child should have no loose stools for 24 hours prior to returning to school. **Exception:** A healthcare provider has determined it is not infectious. Diarrhea may occasionally be caused by antibiotics, new foods a child has eaten, or teething. Call the parent to find out if there is a non-medical reason for the loose bowel movements.

**4. Vomiting:** A child that has vomited two or more times. The child should have no vomiting for 24 hours prior to returning to school. **Exception:** A healthcare provider has determined it is not infectious.

**5. Rash:** A child with a rash AND a fever or a change in behavior. Any rash illness and fever should be checked by a healthcare provider. There are different rules for returning to school depending on the cause of the rash.

**6. Injury:** Whenever an injury is serious enough to need a health care provider's attention, a parent should be contacted to take the child home.

**7. Skin sores:** A child with weeping sores on an exposed area that cannot be covered with waterproof dressing.

**8. Certain communicable diseases:** Children and staff diagnosed with certain communicable diseases may have to be excluded for a certain period of time.

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## **Caregivers Should:**

- Separate the child from others if they have any of the above symptoms.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Encourage parents to keep children home if they are ill.

While not an emergency situation (no need to have the child picked up immediately), children with the following diseases should remain at home until successfully treated: impetigo, lice, ringworm, and scabies.