

When to Stay Home From School

(At a Glance Reference Sheet)

SYMPTOM:	MAY RETURN AFTER:
Fever of 100°F or higher:	 Can return to school when fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol/Ibuprofen).
Vomit/Diarrhea:	 Students need to be symptom-free (no vomiting or diarrhea) for at least 24 hours without medication before returning. During peak "stomach flu" season or known outbreaks, a 48-hour exclusion is strongly recommended to prevent further spread.
Colds/Upper Respiratory Infection/COVID:	 May return when you have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and your symptoms are getting better overall.
Sore Throat:	 May return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment if diagnosed with strep throat. If fever accompanies sore throat student can return to school when fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol/Ibuprofen).
Pink or Red Eyes with Discharge:	 Students with red eyes and drainage can come to school unless there is a fever present, behavior change, or unable to avoid touching eyes.
Rashes:	 Please consult with your healthcare provider regarding rash. Discuss with the Health Office before returning to school.

Our phone lines are open! We are here to help.

Fox Prairie Elementary School	(608) 877-5100
Kegonsa Elementary School	(608) 877-5200
Sandhill Elementary School	(608) 877-5400
River Bluff Middle School	(608) 877-5500
Stoughton High School	(608) 877-5600

Symptoms not listed? Check out DHS's [Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases](#) for more signs and symptoms



FROM THE DISTRICT NURSE/SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

Success in the classroom begins with consistent attendance. To maintain a safe and productive learning environment for everyone, it is essential that students remain at home when they are ill. The following parameters, based on **Wisconsin DHS** and **CDC** guidelines, will help you determine when your child should stay home and when they are ready to return to school.

1. Fever (Temperature)

According to the Wisconsin DHS, a fever is defined as a temperature of **100.4°F (38°C) or higher**.

- **When to stay home:** Any student with a temperature of **100.4°F** or higher must remain at home.
- **When to return:** Students may return to school once they have been **fever-free for at least 24 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medications (such as Tylenol/Acetaminophen or Advil/Ibuprofen).
- **School Protocol:** If a student begins to feel unwell and their temperature reaches **100°F**, we will contact a parent/guardian to provide an update and discuss a possible pickup. If a student's temperature reaches **100.4°F** or higher, under Wisconsin DHS guidelines, they must be picked up from school to recover at home.

2. Respiratory Illnesses (Colds, Flu, and COVID-19)

Respiratory viruses are common and can significantly impact a student's ability to learn. Students should stay home if they have a fever (see above) or if symptoms—such as a persistent cough or shortness of breath—prevent them from participating in class.

- **COVID-19 & Flu:** Specific mandatory isolation periods (like the previous 5-day rule) have been replaced by a **symptom-based approach**. If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or Influenza, they should follow the same rules as any other respiratory virus: stay home until symptoms improve, and they are 24 hours fever-free.

3. Stomachaches, Vomiting, and Diarrhea

Stomach discomfort is common; however, certain symptoms require exclusion from school to prevent the spread of highly contagious gastrointestinal viruses, such as Norovirus.

- **When to Stay Home:** Students must stay home if they have experienced vomiting or diarrhea (3 or more episodes) within the last 24 hours.
- **The "24-Hour Rule":** To return to school, the Wisconsin DHS standard requires that a student must be free of vomiting and diarrhea for **at least 24 hours** without the use of medication.
- **Peak Season Precautions:** During "Stomach Bug" season (typically winter and spring) or during a known Norovirus outbreak, the DHS recommends a 48-hour exclusion period.

after the final episode of vomiting or diarrhea. Because these viruses are highly resilient, waiting an extra day can prevent the illness from spreading through an entire classroom.

- **Anxiety and Stress-Related Symptoms:** We recognize that some stomachaches are related to stress or anxiety rather than infection. In these instances, we encourage students to remain in school and work through it.

4. Sore Throats and Strep Throat

- **General:** Students may attend school with a mild sore throat if no fever is present.
- **Strep Throat:** If a student is diagnosed with Strep Throat by a healthcare provider, Wisconsin DHS requires the student to be on **antibiotics for a full 24 hours** and be fever-free before returning to school.

5. Rashes and Skin Conditions

- **When to stay home:** If a rash is accompanied by a fever, is "weepy"/draining, or is spreading rapidly, the child should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- **Return Criteria:** Students with a rash may generally return once a provider has confirmed it is non-contagious or after the rash has resolved.

6. Eye Health (Pink Eye)

- **Criteria:** Students with red eyes and drainage (conjunctivitis) may attend school **unless** they have a fever, show a change in behavior, or are unable to avoid touching their eyes. Antibiotics are not strictly required for return unless specified by your doctor.

7. Headaches and Earaches

- **Guidelines:** We encourage students to remain in school with mild headaches or earaches.
- **Medical Follow-up:** If these pains are frequent or accompanied by fever or drainage (for earaches), please consult a healthcare provider.
- **Medication:** If your child requires over-the-counter pain relief at school, please contact the School Health Assistant to complete the required authorization forms.

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