Staying Home from School or Childcare When Your Child is Sick

Parents and Caregivers,
Help your child stay healthy and ready to learn! If you think that your child has an illness that can be spread to others, please keep them home from school or childcare. Contact your healthcare provider if you think medical attention is needed.
For many illnesses it is okay to go to school, especially when symptoms are mild. Frequent handwashing and staying up to date with vaccinations can help prevent illnesses.
Information for specific illnesses can be found on the School and Childcare Exclusion List at https://bitly.cx/ytNj

Questions to Consider When Your Child is Sick:

1. Does your child's illness keep him/her from comfortably taking part in activities?

2. Does your sick child need more care than staff can provide without affecting the health and safety of other children?

3. Could other children get sick from being near your child?

If the answer to any of these questions is "**Yes**," please keep your child out of school or childcare.

A Quick Reference: Should my child stay home?

Cough: A mild cough does not necessarily mean that a child needs to stay home. Your child will need to stay home if the cough is constant, causes shortness of breath, problems breathing, or if they have a fever.

Diarrhea: Keep your child home if he or she has 3 or more loose stools (poop) in 24 hours. Your child may return at least 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea and if they have no more than 2 stools above their normal and stool is contained in the diaper for diapered children.

Fever: Keep your child home for a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher AND if they are experiencing behavior change or other signs of illness. Your child may return when they no longer have a fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine .

Rash: Keep your child home if the rash is associated with change in behavior, fever, tenderness, oozing, or is an open wound that can't be covered.

Vomiting: Keep your child home if unexplained vomiting has occurred 2 or more times in a 24-hour period. Your child may return after at least 24 hours after the last episode and when well enough to participate in routine activities.

When should sick children stay home from school or childcare?

If your child feels too sick to go to school or childcare and is unable to participate in activities, they should be kept at home.

Does my child need to stay home when the child just has a cold?

Most children with mild colds who have no fever (without taking fever reducing medication) and who feel well enough to go to school or childcare do not need to stay home.

How long will my child need to stay home if sick?

The School and Childcare Exclusion List explains how long children should stay home after they become sick with certain illnesses.

What illness might keep my child from participating in activities?

Children with illnesses that can be spread to others may not be allowed to participate in some sports, physical education, or other school activities.

Tips for keeping healthy:

- The most effective way to stop the spread of germs is frequent handwashing. Teach your children to wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Keeping up to date with all recommended vaccinations.
- School age children need 9-12 hours of sleep each night.
- Stay hydrated!

Resources:

New Jersey Department of Health School Health Page

New Jersey Immunization Requirements

Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program