



An Unwell Child – should I keep my child at home?

When your child is unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. A few simple guidelines can help.

Not every illness needs to keep your child from school. If you keep your child away from school, be sure to inform the school each day of their absence.

Use common sense when deciding whether or not your child is too ill to attend school. Ask yourself the following questions.

Is your child well enough to do the activities of the school day? If not, keep your child at home.

Does your child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff? If so, keep your child at home.

Would you take a day off work if you had this condition? If so, keep your child at home.



Common conditions

If your child is ill, it is likely to be due to one of a few minor health conditions. Whether you send your child to school will depend on how severe you think the illness is. This guidance from the NHS and HSC Public Health Agency can help you make that judgement.

Remember: if you are concerned about your child's health, consult a health professional.

Cough and cold. - A child with a minor cough or cold may attend school. If the cold is accompanied by a raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school, and return to school 24 hours after they start to feel better. If your child has a more severe and long-lasting cough, consult your GP.

Raised temperature. - If your child has a raised temperature, they should not attend school. As a rule, a temperature of 38C (100.4F) or above is classified as a fever in children.

Rashes and skin infections. - Rashes can be the first sign of many infectious illnesses

- **Chicken pox** – keep your child at home until all the spots have crusted over
- **German Measles** – keep your child home for 4 days from the onset of the rash.
- **Impetigo** – keep your child at home until the lesions are crusted and healed or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment.
- **Measles** – keep your child at home for four days from the onset of the rash.
- **Scarlet Fever** – your child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- **Slapped cheek** – Once the rash has developed your child does not need to be kept off school.

Headache. - A child with a minor headache does not usually need to be kept off school. If the headache is more severe or is accompanied by other symptoms, such as raised temperature or drowsiness, then keep the child off school and consult your GP.

Vomiting and diarrhoea. - Children with these conditions should be kept off school. They can return 48 hours after their symptoms disappear. Most cases of vomiting or diarrhoea get better without treatment, but if symptoms persist, consult your GP.



Sore throat. - A sore throat alone does not have to keep a child from school. If it is accompanied by a raised temperature, the child should stay at home.

Conjunctivitis. - Children with conjunctivitis need not be kept off school.

Impetigo. – Children with impetigo need to be kept off school until there is no more blistering or crusting, or until 48 hours

after antibiotic treatment has been started.

Please remember that if your child is on antibiotics to be taken 3 times a day then this can be managed outside of the school day. Should your child require antibiotics 4 times a day then the office will be happy to give these to your child. You will need to sign a medical consent form.