

# An Unwell Child

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

## Student Illness

Not every illness needs to keep your child from attending school.

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.



However, some children arrive at school clearly unwell and unfit for school.

The result is that our office staff have to interrupt their work to try and contact parents just to send them home again. Please don't send your ailing son or daughter to school for us to decide how ill they are—it is *your responsibility* to make that judgement first thing in the morning.

**Please do not send an unwell child in with the message for them to report to medical if they still feel unwell.**

When students become ill suddenly, or as the day goes on, and they need to go home, our school staff will phone you. We do not allow the students to contact you directly as this may result in us being unaware that your child is ill. **Please ensure that we have up-to-date phone numbers for you and your family so that we can contact you quickly and easily should the need arise.**

**Tell the school:** It's important to inform the school if your child is going to be absent. On the first day of your child's illness, telephone the school to tell us that your child will be staying at home. We may ask about the nature of the illness and how long you expect the absence to last.

If it becomes clear that your child will be away for longer than expected, phone us as soon as possible to explain this on our **Absence Line 01980 676650**

**Remember we need to know on the first day and every day thereafter of their absence.**

## **There is no school nurse on site**

Please be aware that there is **no** school nurse on the premises and the office staff that see students are only expected to administer basic first aid to your child when they become ill or injured during the school day.

## **Medications in school**

Parents should inform their child's tutor/Progress Leader of any medical problems which might affect their attendance or school work. **Students should not carry any medication around in school with them** (the only exception to this is emergency inhalers and Epi-pens).

Where a Doctor prescribes medicine to be taken 3 times a day— you can give a dose before school, after school and at bedtime. It is often not necessary to have a dose during the school day.

However if your Doctor or the Hospital state it is necessary for your child to take medication during the school day, the medication should be taken to Reception where a form must be completed by a parent to give permission for staff to administer it. Our staff will need to see evidence from your doctor, pharmacist or hospital that the medication must be taken during the school day- this will usually be found on the pharmacist's label on the medication item.

Over the counter medicines, creams, pain relief (Paracetamol and Ibuprofen) and antihistamines must be brought to Reception in their original packaging. It is no longer necessary for you to get a Doctors' prescription for these items. The school will not accept nor give Aspirin to any pupil.

Staff are unable to administer any other form of medication other than that stated above.

### **Previous injury**

Staff will not administer any treatment to an existing injury including those caused outside of school hours. When your child has an on-going condition requiring medical supplies i.e. plasters, supports or bandages it is the parents' responsibility to provide the child with an adequate supply of these for use during the school day. The office staff will not treat sunburn.

### **Common Conditions**

If your child is ill, it's 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 can help you make that judgement.

**Athlete's Foot** - Athlete's Foot is not a serious condition and your child does not need to be kept off school. Treatment for the condition is readily available from Chemists.

**Chickenpox and Shingles** - You should keep your child away from school for at least five days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters on the rash are dry and crusted over. The fluid inside the spot is infectious. Most children become free from chickenpox in less than two weeks.

**Cold sores** - There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone whilst they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups, water bottles and towels.

**Conjunctivitis** - You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly. Bacterial or viral conjunctivitis is usually spread from person to person by direct or indirect contact with discharge from the eye. Pupils are encouraged to maintain good hygiene practises including thorough handwashing. Exclusion from school if an individual has conjunctivitis is NOT required unless they feel particularly unwell. However we encourage parents to notify us if your child has conjunctivitis so that staff can take preventative action to reduce the risk of transmission to others.

**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, visit the GP 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. They can give guidance on whether the child should stay off school. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly. A child who comes to our medical office suffering from a cold/cough during the school day is encouraged to return to class. A new, continuous cough could be coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Ear infection** - If your child has an ear infection and a fever or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their fever goes away.

**Fever/raised temperature** - If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. They can return 24 hours after they start to feel better. A high temperature, where your child feels hot to touch on their chest or back could be coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Flu** - Flu is a common infectious viral illness spread by coughs and sneezes that affects the respiratory system. It is caused by a different virus than the common cold. A cold appears gradually and people are generally able to carry on with the rest of their day while feeling unwell. A bad bout of flu generally feels much worse and will make an individual feel unwell and too exhausted to carry on with their daily routine.

Flu symptoms generally come on very quickly and can include

- A sudden fever – a temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or above
- Dry, chesty cough, sneezing
- Headache
- Tiredness or exhaustion
- Chills, aching body, limb or joint pain
- Diarrhoea or tummy pain, nausea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping

If your child has flu, they should be kept off school until they are recovered.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

**Hand, foot and mouth disease** - If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease and seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off.

**Headache** - A child with a minor headache doesn't 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.

**Head lice and nits** - Anyone can catch head lice through direct, prolonged head-to-head contact or through infected clothes, combs, brushes or towels. Head lice cannot jump, hop or swim and are not associated with poor hygiene nor do they prefer clean nor dirty hair. Head lice are not a serious health problem and rarely cause anything more than an itchy scalp. Exclusion from school is NOT required for head lice. When live lice are spotted visit your chemist for treatments. It is important that the instructions on the bottle are followed carefully and that all the family and close contacts are checked or treated if necessary. Treatment should be started as soon as possible on the day of the diagnosis – you do not need to keep your child away from 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.

**Migraines** - Children can experience headaches and feeling sick when having a migraine- this is not a reason to keep your child off as migraine relief medication can be obtained over the counter. If your child has been sick as a result of a migraine, and you do not suspect they have contracted a virus (i.e. no accompanying diarrhoea) then they can attend school as normal.

**Rashes** - Rashes can be the first sign of many infectious illnesses, such as chickenpox and measles. Children with these conditions shouldn't attend school. If your child has a rash, check with your GP or practice nurse before sending them to school.

**Ringworm** – If your child has ringworm, see your pharmacist unless it is on their scalp, in which case you should see your GP. It is fine for your child to attend school once they have started treatment.

**Scarlet fever** – If your child has scarlet fever, they will need treatment with antibiotics from your GP, otherwise they will be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can come back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.

**Slapped cheek (Parvovirus, Fifth's Disease)** – The incubation period for slapped cheek is 6 to 11 days and the disease is spread by the respiratory route with a person being infectious 3 to 5 days before the rash occurs. Exclusion from school is not required as an individual is no longer infectious once the rash appears. If your child is diagnosed with slapped cheek- it is important that you tell us.

**Sore throat** - A sore throat alone doesn't have to keep a child from school. If it's accompanied by a raised temperature, your child should stay at home.

**Teeth** - Children often have loose teeth or teeth that come out during the school day. The loss of a juvenile tooth is a natural process and is not a reason to keep your child off school. Mild pain relief may be given in the morning before they attend school. If your child loses a tooth during the school day as a result of natural tooth replacement, they are encouraged to swill their mouth out with clean water, pop the tooth (if they want to keep it) in their pocket and carry on with their day as normal. Natural tooth loss should only cause a minor pain and would not normally require us to call you. If your child experiences severe pain or if a tooth is knocked out unexpectedly, we would call you. Tooth pain can be distressing when your child has a brace fitted or tightened- if necessary, encourage your child to take a long-lasting pain killer before coming to school.

**Threadworms** - You do not need to keep your child off from school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist who can recommend a treatment.

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

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

Useful contacts:

15/06/2023

### **Salisbury Walk-in Centre**

Is run on a first-come first-served basis unless someone is acutely unwell and needs immediate medical attention.

It is located within Millstream Medical Centre, Avon Approach, Salisbury SP1 3SI Telephone 01722 331191.

Opening times correct at 26 March 2021

<b>Monday</b>	18:30-22:00
<b>Tuesday</b>	18:30-22:00
<b>Wednesday</b>	18:30-22:00
<b>Thursday</b>	18:30-22:00
<b>Friday</b>	18:30-22:00
<b>Weekends</b>	08:00-20:00
<b>Bank Holidays</b>	08:00-20:00

### **You should call 111 if:**

- You need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency
- You don't know who to call for medical help or you don't have a GP to call
- You think you need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service; or
- You require health information or reassurance about what to do next.

This information was sourced from the NHS Choices Website and The Spotty Book