WHEN TO KEEP SICK CHILDREN HOME FROM SCHOOL

The goal of these guidelines is to promote a healthy school environment and to decrease the spread of communicable disease. **Please notify your child’s school when your child is absent.**

**RUNNY NOSE & COUGHING:** A minor cold or allergy symptoms should not be a reason to miss school. A mild hacking cough often starts after the first few days of a common cold. A child with mild symptoms, no fever and otherwise feeling well may be fine at school.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with deep or uncontrollable coughing belongs at home even without a fever. **A child with cough and fever must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.**

**DIARRHEA/VOMITING:** A single episode of diarrhea without fever or a small amount of vomit without a fever may not be enough reason to miss school.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Children who have vomited or have frequent diarrhea should be kept at home and should return to school only after being symptom-free for 24 hours.

**FEVER:** Fevers are a common symptom of viral and bacterial infection. Children are likely to be contagious to others when they have a fever. Please do not give your child fever reducing medicine and then send them to school. The medicine will wear off, the fever will probably return and you would need to pick them up anyway.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Any child with a fever of 100°F or higher should not attend school and should not return until they have been fever free for 24 hours. **A child with flu-like illness (fever and a cough) must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.**

**HEADACHES:** A child whose only complaint is a mild headache usually does not need to stay home from school. Complaints of frequent or more severe headaches should be evaluated by a medical provider, including vision exam if needed.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with a significant headache belongs at home until feeling better.

**RASHES:** Rashes can be caused by many things, a few of which may be contagious. Rashes may cover the entire body or be in only one area and are most contagious in the early stages. A rash caused by poison ivy/poison oak is not contagious and is not a reason to miss school.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** If you do not know what the rash is, do not send a child to school until a medical provider has said it is safe to do so — especially with additional symptoms like itching, fever or appearing ill.

**SORE THROAT:** A child with a mild sore throat, no fever and otherwise feeling well may be fine to attend school.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** Keep a child at home and contact a medical provider for a severe sore throat and if white spots are seen in the back of the throat, with or without a fever.
**FLU (INFLUENZA):** The flu is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and can cause mild to severe illness. A person with influenza can be contagious up to one week after symptoms appear.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** A child with flu-like illness (fever and cough) must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine. A fever is defined as a temperature of 100°F or higher. If symptoms occur while at school, the student must be picked up as soon as possible to go home. Contact a medical provider with severe symptoms.

**OPEN SORES:** If your child has a blister or open sore on the skin that becomes covered with a yellowish crust, it may be contagious.

**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL:** If child has open sores, often seen around the nose or mouth but could be seen anywhere on the body, your child needs to be evaluated by a doctor.

**FREQUENT SYMPTOMS:** Sometimes children pretend or exaggerate illness in order to say home. However, frequent complaints of tummy aches, headaches and other symptoms may be a physical sign that a child is feeling emotionally stressed, a common experience even in children. Consult a medical provider to evaluate symptoms. Stress-based complaints cause some children to unnecessarliy miss a great deal of school. It is important to check often with your children about how things are going. Share concerns with school staff so they can provide support for you and your child to help make attending school a positive experience.

Again, these guidelines are designed to assist in your decision-making process as to whether or not to send your child to school. Your doctor will assist you to determine if your child needs to be seen at an office visit. If you have any questions about when to keep your child home from school, please contact the school nurse.
Important Information to Share with Your Child's School Nurse

- If your child has a chronic illness that requires medication or a treatment/procedure at school
- If your child has a new medical diagnosis/condition
- If there has been a change in your child’s health
- If your child has any injury that affects their ability to walk
- If your child has an allergy or develops a new allergy
- If there has been a change in your child’s medication
- If your child starts on a new medication
- If your child has been hospitalized or sent to the emergency room
- If your child has been treated for an infectious disease
- If there has been a change at home that may affect your child, such as a loss or serious illness in the family
- If there is a change in your child’s health insurance or if you need help acquiring health insurance

It is important that all emergency contact is up to date. Please inform the school or the school nurse of any changes in phone numbers, address, or other contacts who can pick your child up during an emergency or illness. Please feel free to contact your child’s school nurse with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your child.