

Sickness Absence in Schools

A Guide for Parents

Most children with mild illness can attend school providing that they feel well enough.

This guidance is designed to help you know when it’s okay to send your child into school and when it’s best for them to stay at home.

Infections can be passed from person to person resulting in infection and disease. Infections can spread easily in “closed” environments such as schools are due to the number of people together in close proximity. The spread of infection can be prevented or reduced by measures such as:

• Vaccinations

• Keeping yourself clean, including regular hand washing

• Keeping areas your children go into clean.

In some situations, children or staff with certain infections should not attend school to reduce the risk of spread to others.

The below advice is based on national Public Health England guidance, and your individual school policy may differ.

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| Condition | Absence  Advised | Length of absence from school | Comments |
| Headache Earache Stomach ache | No | None | Take plenty of fluids, and if you feel it is needed, you can give your child paracetamol. Check the patient information leaflet, label or packaging beforehand.  Seek medical advice if it continues or seems worse than normal. |
| High temperature | No | None | If a rash is present, seek medical advice from GP or NHS Direct before attending school. A high temperature can be draining and your child may not feel well enough to attend |
| Coughs and colds | No | None | Take plenty of fluids, and eat well. Liquid forms of paracetamol are available for children |
| Sore throat and tonsillitis | No | None | Take plenty of fluid and speak to your pharmacist or GP for over the counter treatments |
| Head lice | No | None | There are several products that can be applied to the scalp and hair to kill head lice. |
| Warts and varrucae | No | None | Verrucae should be covered with a waterproof plaster |
| Conjuctivitis | No | None | Encourage the child not to touch their eye and to wash hands frequently |
| Flu | Yes | Until recovered | Flu is highly infectious and can be dangerous to the vulnerable. Flu vaccine is available to certain year groups. |
| Diarrhoea and vomiting caused by infection | Yes | Until 48 hours after the last symptom | Most cases will be caused by viruses such as norovirus. Other infections are less common, but may require longer absence. Ring NHS Direct or contact your GP for advice |
| Scabies | Yes | After the first treatment | Everyone living in the same household will need to be treated at the same time |
| Impetigo | Yes | Until lesions have healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotics | The main treatments prescribed by a GP will include creams or tablets. They usual have to be used for around a week. |
| Measles | Yes | Must be absent for four days after the rash has appeared | Measles is highly infectious and can be dangerous to vulnerable adults and children who haven’t been  vaccinated. Measles can be prevented through the MMR vaccine |
| Chickenpox | Yes | Until the vesicles have dried over | Paracetamol can help your child if they have a high temperature. Calamine and mois- turising creams can help soothe the skin and reduce the need to itch. |
| German measles | Yes | Must be absent for four days after the rash has appeared | German measles (Rubella) can be prevented through the MMR vaccine. |
| Mumps | Yes | Must be absent until 5 days after the swelling started | Mumps can be prevented through the MMR vaccine |
| Whooping cough | Yes | Until the child has taken 5 days of antibiotics or if not taking antibiotics, should be off for 21 days | Whooping cough can be prevented by a vaccine |
| TB | Yes if pulmonary | Not all types of TB are infectious | Local Health Protection team will be able to advise |

Remember that you can contact the School Nursing Service for advice, particularly if a child has on-going health need that is affecting their attendance.

The Birmingham School Health Advisory Service (SHAS) South West can be contacted on 0121 466 4505 or email [BCHNT.charlotteroadsnteam@nhs.net](mailto:BCHNT.charlotteroadsnteam@nhs.net)

Further advice can be found from NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx)