

## When to keep children at home

There are three reasons to keep sick children at home:

1. When your child has a contagious or communicable disease.
2. When your child is exhibiting any of the signs or symptoms listed below or has an illness for which temporary exclusion is recommended for the health and safety of your child as well as other children.
3. When your child does not feel well enough to comfortably participate in their normal school activities.

Children with the following symptoms or illness should be kept (excluded) from school:

| Symptom   | Child must be at home?  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Fever:</b><br/>Elevated temperature of 100° F or greater demonstrates the need to exclude the student from the school setting.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> A fever is noted to be present at 100.4°F.</p> | <p><b>YES</b> – when accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness, i.e.: rash, sore throat, stomach ache/vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, head ache, ear ache. The student should be fever free (oral temperature below 99° F) without the use of fever-reducing medicines, for a complete school day (24 hours) before returning to school.</p> |
| <p><b>Flu Symptoms:</b><br/>Fever over 100° F or greater with cough and/or sore throat.<br/>Other flu symptoms can include fatigue, body aches, vomiting and/or diarrhea.</p>                           | <p><b>YES</b> – for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.</p>  |
| <p><b>Coughing:</b><br/>Severe uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficult breathing; coughing lasting longer than 5-7 days.</p>  | <p><b>Yes</b> – medical attention is necessary.</p>   |
| <p><b>Mild Respiratory or cold Symptoms:</b><br/>Stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, mild cough; no temperature elevation.</p>   | <p><b>No</b> – may attend if able to participate in school activities.</p>  |
| <p><b>Vomiting:</b><br/>Two or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hours.</p>  | <p><b>YES</b> – until vomiting resolves (no further vomiting for 24 hours). Observe for other signs of illness and for dehydration.</p>   |
| <p><b>Diarrhea:</b><br/>Frequent, loose or watery stools compared to child’s normal pattern; not caused by diet or medication.</p>  | <p><b>YES</b> – if the child looks or acts ill; if the child has diarrhea with temperature elevation of 100° F or greater; if child has diarrhea and vomiting.</p>  |
| <p><b>Rash <i>WITH</i> Fever:</b></p>   | <p><b>YES</b> – see medical advice. Any rash that</p>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| A body rash <i>without</i> fever or behavior changes usually does not require exclusion from school; seek medical advice. | spreads quickly, has open, weeping wounds and/or is not healing should be evaluated. |
|---|--|

| Illness  | Child must be at home?  |
|--|---|
| <b>Conjunctivitis</b><br>Pink/reddish color to white part of the eye <i>and</i> thick discharge may be yellow or greenish in color.                    | <b>YES</b> –discharge and signs of infection have cleared or completion of 24 hour treatment with ophthalmic solution prescribed by a health care provider. |
| <b>Head lice or scabies</b>  | <b>No</b> - Treatment initiated.<br><br><u>Note:</u> Strict adherence to product directions is essential for successful eradication of parasites.           |
| <b>Impetigo</b> (to include: streptococci, staphylococcus, MRSA infections)<br>Blister like lesions which develop into pustules. May “weep” and crust. | <b>Yes</b> – for 24 hours after medical treatment initiated.<br><u>Note:</u> Lesions must be covered for school attendance.                                 |
| <b>Ringworm</b>  | <b>No</b> – Treatment initiated<br><u>Note:</u> Lesions must be covered for school attendance.  |
| <b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b><br>Measles, Mumps, Rubella, (German Measles), Chicken pox, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Influenza                   | <b>YES</b> – until determined not infectious by medical care provider.  |

What can I do to help prevent the spread of contagious diseases in my home?

- Remind your children to wash their hands often.
- Reinforce the practice of coughing or sneezing into a sleeve or upper arm instead of hands.
- Throw away tissues immediately after each use and immediately wash hands.
- Remind your children not to drink or eat after others, including family members.
- Circulate fresh air through the house at least once a day.
- Provide your children with a balanced diet.
- Keep bed times regular. School aged children need 8-10 hours of sleep each night.
- Encourage at least 60 minutes of daily exercise and daily trips out of doors.

- Encourage your children to dress appropriately for the weather. Layering clothing so they may remove and add as their activity level warrants.
- Take your child to the doctor if the symptoms persist.
- If you use over the counter medications—use only those that are specific for your child’s symptoms. NEVER give children aspirin, adult medications, someone else’s medication or medication left over or outdated.
- Increase fluid intake (juices and water).
- Allow your child to rest and fully recover before sending him/her back to school.

REMINDER: The **ONLY** medication the school can administer is medication prescribed by a physician. Permission forms, signed by the parent and physician, giving school personnel permission to administer medications to students may be obtained from the school nurse’s office. The form and the medication (**in the original container, properly labeled**) is to remain in the nurse’s office until the medication is depleted or discontinued by the physician.

This information is based upon guidelines from American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control, Clinical Guidelines for School Nurses (2007) and DoDEA DSM 2942.1, March 2004.

Please contact your school nurse should you have any questions or wish to discuss your child’s medical condition.

M. Barry, BSN, Med., NCSN, FNASN  
Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Student Health and Wellness ISS  
4800 Mark Center Dr.  
Alexandria, VA 22350-1400  
Tel: (571) 372-6011  
E-mail: [margaret.barry@hq.dodea.edu](mailto:margaret.barry@hq.dodea.edu)