

# ILLNESS AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



A guide for parents

# Welcome



Regular attendance at school is very important for your child's wellbeing.

We also know that there is a close correlation between the amount of time children spend in school and the progress they make. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of primary school have higher rates of attendance compared to children with the lowest attainment.

All children get ill sometimes, and as a parent or carer, it can be difficult to know when to keep them at home. We've created this guide to support you when making the decision.

If you have any questions about your child's health, please contact your GP, local pharmacy or school nurse, who will be happy to discuss this with you.

## How you can help

Please contact the school office in the morning if your child is going to be off school. You can leave a message on the answerphone and remember to include your child's name, class, and the reason why they will be absent.

Most children have the odd early morning ache or pain that soon passes. If your child seems well in themselves, then bring them to school and let staff know so they can contact you if your child's symptoms continue or worsen. Try not to keep them at home *just in case*, because they're missing out on valuable learning and social time with their friends. It's important that the school has your up-to-date contact details, so let the office know any new details as soon as possible.

## Medical appointments

Try to schedule medical appointments (doctors, dentists, opticians etc) outside school hours because interruptions can be disruptive to your child's learning. If this isn't possible, your child should attend school for the rest of the day.

## Medicines in school

Children don't usually need to stay at home just because they're taking medicine. Please speak to school staff if your child needs to take medication during the day.

Three times a day antibiotics can be managed around the school day – one dose first thing, the second immediately after school and the third before bedtime. If your child needs more than three doses, let the school know.

## Hand washing

Children are often too busy having fun to remember to wash their hands. But this means that viruses and bacteria spread easily and can cause your child to become ill more frequently, and to pass illnesses on to friends and family.

Remind your children how important it is to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly, particularly after using the toilet, before eating, after blowing their nose or coughing and after touching an animal. Show them the [NHS video on how to wash hands](#).

## Staying healthy

There are lots of things you can do to help your child stay healthy:

- Make sure your child's vaccinations are up to date
- Encourage them to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly
- Ensure your child gets enough sleep
- Encourage children to eat healthily and keep active
- Register them with a local GP
- Have regular checks with a dentist and optician
- Speak to school staff if you have any concerns



# Minor Illnesses

The most common minor illnesses that affect children are:

## 1/ Raised temperature

If your child has a raised temperature of 38C or more, then they need to stay off school until they feel better. Please make sure you have a digital thermometer so that you can measure this as the 'touch test' isn't always accurate.

The NHS has some useful advice about fever in children.

## 2/ Coughs and colds

All children get coughs and colds. If they don't have a temperature and feel well, they can continue to attend school. Coughs can often be persistent, but if your child's lasts for more than a few weeks, take them to a GP. If your child has asthma, make sure that the school has a spare inhaler and spacer.

## 3/ Rashes

Viral rashes are common in children. Sometimes they can be the first sign of illnesses like chickenpox or measles. The NHS has some information about [rashes in children](#).

If your child has an unexplained rash, please seek medical advice. You can contact your GP, call NHS 111 or take your child to a local urgent care centre. If you suspect that the rash might be infectious, please keep your child off school until they have been seen by a medical professional, who will be able to advise you on next steps.

**NHS 111**

Phone: 111 (FREE)

Website: [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)



# Recommendations

Illness	Recommendation
Chicken pox and shingles	Keep off school for five days from start of rash and until all the spots have crusted over
Cold sores	No need to be off school
Conjunctivitis	No need to be off school
Coughs and colds	No need to be off school unless your child has a fever. See a GP if cough persists
Diarrhoea and vomiting virus	Keep off school until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. If vomiting is not caused by a virus (eg travel sickness, cough) your child can return when they feel better
Ear infection	Keep off school if your child has a fever. See a GP if symptoms persist
Flu (influenza)	Children should return to school as soon as they have recovered
Glandular fever	No need to be off school
Hand, foot and mouth disease	It is not usually necessary to keep off school
Headache	No need to be off school unless your child has a temperature. Contact GP if persistent or severe

Illness	Recommendation
Head lice (nits)	No need to be off school – please treat ASAP. See <a href="#">NHS guidance on how to treat</a> .
Impetigo	Keep off school until lesions (spots) are crusted or healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment, whichever is shorter
Measles	Keep off school for at least four days from start of rash and until recovered
Molluscum contagiosum	No need to be off school
Mumps	Keep off school for five days from start of swollen glands
Ringworm	It is not usually necessary to keep off school once your child has started treatment
Rubella (German measles)	Keep off school for four days from start of rash
Scabies	Children can return to school after first treatment
Scarlet fever	Keep off school for 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Slapped cheek / Fifth disease / Parvovirus B19	No need to be off school once rash has developed
Threadworms	No need to be off school. Speak to your pharmacist
Toothache	No need to be off school. See a dentist if it persists for more than two days

Illness	Recommendation
Tummy ache	No need to be off school for mild tummy ache. Speak to school if it persists with no other symptoms of illness
Warts and verrucae	No need to be off school
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Keep off school for two days after starting antibiotics or 21 days from start of cough if no antibiotic treatment has been given

Source: Information taken from NHS guidance

### When a parent or sibling is ill

It can be tough juggling the daily routine when someone in the family becomes ill. But if your child is well, they should still go to school.

Try to make other arrangements, for example asking a friend or family member to take them for you if you can't make it yourself.

If you are having difficulties do speak to the school, who may be able to help you.

### Advice and support

Please speak to your GP, pharmacist or school if you have any concerns about your child's health. You can also find some other useful contacts here:

NHS 111  
 Phone: 111 (FREE)  
 Website: [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)

[List of Support Services for families in Hertfordshire](#)

[List of Support Services for families in Enfield](#)



# Ivy Learning Trust

 [ivylearningtrust.org](https://ivylearningtrust.org)

 020 3972 4600

 [contact@ivylearningtrust.org](mailto:contact@ivylearningtrust.org)

