



A parent's guide to managing sickness absence from school

Illness

Occasionally pupils are too unwell to attend school. Schools will monitor and engage with parents as soon as a pattern of absence becomes apparent. When deciding whether or not your child is too ill to attend school. Ask yourself:

- Is your child well enough to carry out the activities of the school day? If not, keep your child at home and consult your GP as appropriate.
- 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.

Common conditions

Most illnesses can be classified as one of a few minor health conditions. Whether or not you send your child to school will depend on how severe you judge the illness to be. This guidance can help you to make that judgement. If you're concerned about your child's health, consult a health professional.

Cough and cold

A child with a minor cough or cold may attend school. If the cold is accompanied by raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school, visit the GP and return to school 24 hours after they're feeling better. If your child has a more severe and long-lasting cough, consult your GP, who can provide guidance on whether the child should stay off school.

Raised temperature

If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. They can return 24 hours after they're feeling better.

Rash

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.

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.

Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with these conditions should be kept off school. They can return 48 hours after their symptoms disappear. Most cases of vomiting or diarrhoea get better without treatment, but if symptoms persist, consult your GP.

Sore throat

A sore throat alone doesn't have to keep a child from school. If it's accompanied by a raised temperature, the child should stay at home. Inform the school before 9:30am on every day your child is absent from school due to illness.

Teach germs a lesson!

The table below provides guidance on appropriate absence periods for some common infections and is taken from the 'Teach germs a lesson! Infection Control Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools' provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, Health Challenge Wales and the National Public Health Service for Wales.

Disease	Absence period
Chicken Pox	For 5 days after rash appears
Conjunctivitis	None
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting
Hand, foot and mouth disease	None
Hepatitis A	Young children - 7 days after onset of jaundice. There is no need for older children with good hygiene to be absent, provided they are well enough to attend school
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted or healed
Measles	For 5 days after rash appears
Mumps	For 5 days after onset of swollen glands
Pertussis (whooping cough)	For 5 days after commencing antibiotics
Ringworm	Until treatment is started
Rubella (German measles)	For 5 days after the onset of the rash
Scabies	Until treated
Scarlet fever	For 5 days after commencing antibiotics
Threadworms	None
Tuberculosis	CCDC will advise on necessary action

By law, only the head teacher can authorise your child's absence. It is important to keep the school informed if your child is going to be absent as soon as possible at the start of the day. Telephone the school to tell them that your child will be staying at home. The school will ask about the nature of the illness and the expected duration of absence from school. If it becomes clear that your child will be away from school for longer than expected, phone the school to explain this as soon as possible. If your child attends school and feels unwell during the school day the school will contact you to arrange collection. Any child who is acutely unwell should be kept away from school until they are well enough to benefit and participate. In addition, even if they appear well, it is necessary to keep children who have certain infectious diseases away from school for an appropriate period to help prevent others from becoming infected.