

Health Office Guidelines

Do you think you have a sick child? Should your child go to school? Here is some advice:

Fever – if your child’s temperature is 100 degrees or higher, keep him/her at home. While at home, encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.

Mild Cough/Runny Nose – if there is no fever and your child feels fairly good, school is fine.

Bad Cough/Cold Symptoms – children with bad coughs need to stay home and possibly see a doctor. It could be a severe cold or possibly bronchitis, flu, or pneumonia. When the cough improves and your child is feeling better, then it’s back to school. Don’t wait for the cough to disappear entirely – that could take a week or longer.

Diarrhea or Vomiting – keep your child home until the illness is over and your child is feeling better.

Sore Throat – a minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Keep your child home and contact a doctor. Your child needs a special test to determine if it is strep throat. He or she can return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins.

Earache – your child needs to see a doctor.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) – keep your child home until a doctor has given the OK to return to school. Pink eye is highly contagious. Most cases are caused by a virus, which will not respond to an antibiotic. Bacterial conjunctivitis will require an antibiotic. Your doctor will be able to determine if this is the case.

Rash – children with a skin rash should be seen by a doctor, as this could be one of several infectious diseases. One possibility is impetigo, a bacterial skin infection that is very contagious and requires antibiotic treatment. Also, fifth disease is a contagious viral illness spread by coughs and sneezes. It is no longer contagious by the time the rash appears.

When in doubt you should always call your pediatric provider for advice. If your child frequently claims to be “sick” but is fine on weekends, that’s a sign of other issues. There may be trouble at school.