

Is my child too ill for school?

When your child is unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. These simple guidelines should help.

Not every illness needs to keep your child from school.

Use common sense when deciding whether or not your child is too ill to attend school. Ask yourself the following questions:

- **Is my child well enough to do the activities of the school day?**
- **Is my child ill or tired?** Many children do not have enough sleep and extreme tiredness is often the underlying reason for a child saying they don't feel well and able to go to school. Please ensure your child has enough sleep. The recommended amount of sleep for children is
 - 4-7year olds: 10.5 and 11.5 hours per night
 - 8-11year olds: 9.5 and 10.5 hours per night
- **Is my child likely to feel better once they are in school?** Remember children often feel worse when they first wake up (and this is sometimes due to tiredness rather than illness) but once they are in school they feel much better. Sometimes, a dose of Calpol in the morning will be enough to help your child feel well enough to come to school. Although school staff cannot administer Calpol (unless it is prescribed), you are welcome to come in at lunchtime to give your child a top up
- **Does my child have an infectious condition (not a simple cough or cold) that could be passed on to other children or school staff?** If so, keep your child at home.
- **Is taking a day off school worth the educational impact of this absence?**
- If your child is on antibiotics, and is otherwise feeling well enough to come to school, we will administer the medicine in school. You will need to bring in the medicine (with dosage instructions) and sign a consent form. Please note that we can only administer prescribed medication (i.e. prescribed by a GP, with your child's name on it).
- **Could there be another reason why your child says they are too unwell for school?** If your child is anxious or stressed about coming to school, please inform a member of staff immediately. Absence can be linked to an underlying issue. We want to work with parents to ensure every child wants to be in school, unless they are genuinely poorly

- **If in doubt, bring your child to school.** We will phone you if your child is too poorly to stay in school for the day.

Common conditions

If your child is ill, it's likely to be due to one of a few minor health conditions. Whether you send your child to school will depend on how severe you think the illness is. Use this guidance to help you make that judgement.

Remember: 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 a raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school, visit the GP and return to school 24 hours after they start to feel better. If your child has a more severe and long-lasting cough, consult your GP. They can give guidance on whether your 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 start to feel better.
- **Rash.** Skin 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 diarrhoea and/or vomiting should definitely be kept off school until 24 hours after their symptoms have gone. Most cases of [diarrhoea and vomiting](#) in children 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. But if it's accompanied by a raised temperature, your child should stay at home.
- **Chickenpox.** If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school for five days after the rash first appears.

Tell the school

It's important to inform the school if your child is going to be absent. On the first day of your child's illness, telephone the school to tell them that your child

will be staying at home. The school may ask about the nature of the illness and how long you expect the absence to last.

If it becomes clear that your child will be away for longer than expected, phone the school as soon as possible to explain this.