

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether to keep your child off school if they feel unwell.

There are government guidelines for schools that say when children should be kept off school. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school every day that they are unwell. Inform the school of the reasons for the absence.

If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let their teacher know.

Chickenpox

If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over.

Cold sores

There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or cold. If they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

Ear infection

If your child has an ear infection and a fever or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their fever goes away.

Fever

If your child has a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes away.

#### Hand, foot and mouth disease

If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

#### Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. See how to get rid of them.

#### Impetigo

If your child has impetigo, they'll need antibiotic treatment from the GP. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share towels, cups and so on with other children at school.

#### Ringworm

If your child has ringworm, see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see the GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

#### Scarlet fever

If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from the GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.

Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

#### Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have slapped cheek syndrome because once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious.

If you suspect your child has slapped cheek syndrome, take them to the GP and let their school know if they're diagnosed with it.

#### Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they also have a fever, they should stay at home until it goes away.

#### Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

#### Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting can return to school as soon as the symptoms have passed. There is no need to keep them off school any longer than needed.