

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. Below are government guidelines for schools about common ailments. These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't. For advice and guidance on attendance at school when your child has an infectious disease, please visit GOV.UK 'Managing Specific Infectious Diseases.'

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone school on the first day. Let school know that your child won't be in and give them the reason. 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.

Important: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Keep your child off school if they have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19. Stay at home and get a test for your child.

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste

Common illnesses *Follow this advice if your child does not have coronavirus symptoms or they had a test and it was negative (they do not have coronavirus).*

Coughs and colds: It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But 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. If your child is asthmatic they may need their blue inhaler more often.

Chickenpox: If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Cold sores: There's 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.

Ear infection: If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature 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.

Headache: Children can come to school. Let the staff know they have felt unwell and give paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink. If symptoms persist seek medical advice.

Head lice: There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat head lice without seeing a GP.

High temperature: If your child has a high temperature, give paracetamol and plenty of drinks. If after paracetamol your child feels better, bring them into school. If the high temperature continues for three days or more, seek medical advice.

Impetigo: If your child has impetigo, they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics. 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 things like towels and cups 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 a 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 a 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: 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 see a 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 high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.

Stomach ache: Children can go to school - let the staff know they feel unwell and give paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink. If symptoms persists seek medical advice.

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

Verrucae and warts: Children can go to school. Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools and changing rooms.

Vomiting and diarrhoea: Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school for 2 days after their symptoms have gone.