



## **What should I do if my child is ill?**

### **A Guide for Parents**

*The following guide is intended to help parents work in partnership with the school when their child becomes ill.*

#### **What should I do if my child is ill?**

Where a pupil is too ill to attend school then the parent should ring to inform the school at the start of the school day.

#### **Why does my school ring me if my child is not at school?**

In cases where a pupil has not arrived at school and there has been no notification from the parents, the school will take reasonable steps to contact parents to confirm that their child is safe and the reason for their absence. Schools are not allowed to authorise absences without justifiable reason. Please make sure that we have correct and up-to-date contact numbers at all times.

#### **What should I do if my child is off for more than one day?**

Please call the school at the start of each day when they are ill. The exception to this is where they have a defined medical condition/ infection where there is a known time that they will be off school. The office will be able to advise how long a child should be off with a given condition. If they are still not well enough to come back to school after their expected return date, please call the school and let us know.

#### **When is the best time to make medical appointments for my child?**

Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. In all cases of a pupil being unable to attend, parents should notify the school as soon as possible. Pupils should return to school immediately after their medical appointment and bring their appointment cards with them.

### **My child is complaining of stomach ache, but I can't tell if they are ill or not, what should I do?**

It is very common for pupils of primary school age to complain of stomach ache when they are, in fact, anxious. There are all sorts of reasons why young children feel like this - it may be that:

- they are having friendship problems.
- another pupil is upsetting them.
- they are worried because they haven't done their homework.
- they don't like doing a certain lesson (e.g. PE).
- they have a test set for that day.

If you are at all unsure, please bring them to school – we will happily keep a close eye on them and, if their condition worsens, we will ring you.

### **My child has a cough, slight cold or sore throat, should they come to school?**

Yes. Coughs, slight colds and sore throats are always unwelcome, but they should not be a reason for not coming to school. Please bring them to school and let the office/ classteacher know. The staff are very experienced at looking after young children and are very good at offering 'TLC'. They will happily keep a close eye on them and, if their condition worsens, they will give you a call.

### **What if my child says they are feeling unwell but I'm unsure if they are or not?**

If you are in any doubt about your child being unwell, then bring them to school. It is surprising how often children quickly start to feel better once they are in school and chatting to their friends and occupied in their work. We have a lot of first aid trained staff in school who can monitor their condition and give you a call if necessary.

### **Can my child's classteacher help?**

Yes. It would be a good idea to have a quick chat with your child's classteacher and explain the situation. The teachers often have some insight into what may be troubling them.

### **How long should my child be off school with sickness or diarrhoea?**

For reasons of infection control, children should not return to school for 24 hours after their last bout of sickness and diarrhoea. Children with diarrhoea lasting more than a couple of days may be a sign of a more serious problem. It can lead to risk of becoming dehydrated and we recommend that you visit your doctors.

### **What if my child is off for prolonged absence?**

I informed the school on the first day my child was ill, why have they rung me again?

Unless the school is informed otherwise, it will assume that your child will return on the next school day. If they do not arrive, and there has been no further notification from the parents, the school will take reasonable steps to contact parents to confirm that their child is safe.

### **My child is due to go into hospital for a period of time. What will happen about continuing their education?**

If your child needs to spend some time in hospital, let the school know as soon as possible. The classteachers will endeavour to provide some work for them to do if they are well enough. The hospitals also usually have teachers attached to them who will be able to spend some time with your child.

### **How does my child's level of illness absence compare to the rest of the school?**

On average, pupils miss just over 3 school days through illness in any given year. This average includes those pupils who have missed many more days through significant illness. Most children have less than 3 days off ill.

### **What should I do if my child is regularly off ill?**

If your child is regularly missing school through illness, it might be that they have been unfortunate in getting sick. However, it could also be an indication of a non-medical problem:

- they might be anxious about something at school.
- they might try to avoid a particular day.
- they might simply like to be at home with their parent.
- the arrival of new babies or the unfortunate break up of families, typically increases feelings of insecurity and is very often accompanied by a child wanting to stay at home.

The school can use its records to help you identify patterns of absence – sickness does not know what day of the week it is, so it would not be expected, for example, for a child's illnesses to regularly fall on a Monday or Friday.

The school staff are ready to work with you, where there is a concern that a child is not genuinely ill - please talk to your classteacher or the Headteacher. If appropriate, we can refer you to our school counsellor, Martin, who has an excellent track record of working successfully in such cases.

### **Will the school always authorise my child's absence when they are ill?**

No. Where the school has concerns about a child's attendance being adversely affected by illness, either through missing several days at a time or through regular days off, the school reserves the right to request that the parent/ carer either:

- a) brings the child to school so that the school can make the decision as to whether the child should be at school or at home, or
- b) completes the pro-forma, *Parental Authorisation for Access to Medical records*, giving the school permission to talk to the child's medical practice to verify the nature and extent of their illness and when they should be back at school.

Where a parent refuses to either bring their child to school or provide consent for the school to liaise with their medical practice, then the child's illness may be registered as unauthorised.

### **What should I do if the school says they can no longer authorise my child's absence?**

It is important that you contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the issue. Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority and can lead to the issuing of penalty fines.

### **I still have concerns about managing my child's illnesses, what should I do?**

We are always here to offer further support and advice. Please ring the school and request a meeting with the Headteacher.