

Colds, Flu, Cough: Is Your Child Too Sick for School?

Recommended Guidelines for Excluding Children from School Due to Illness



Schools should not have students in attendance who are ill and can possibly infect others. California Code of Regulations Title 5, 202 states “A pupil while infected with any contagious or infectious disease may not remain in any public school.” Education code 49451 states that “Whenever there is reason to believe that the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, he shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until the school authorities are satisfied that any contagious disease does not exist.”

Realizing the importance of regular school attendance, guidelines for sending an ill child home should be followed so as to minimize unnecessary exclusion. *Some situations do call for judgment decisions by experienced school staff.*

When a child is too sick to attend school:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in educational tasks
- The staff cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the educational program for other students
- The child has the following symptoms (until a health care provider determines the child is well enough to attend, the symptoms are absent for 24 hours or unless otherwise noted):

- Fever over 100 degrees accompanied by signs and symptoms of illness such as unusual tiredness
- Signs or symptoms of possible severe illness (persistent crying, irritability, uncontrollable coughing, wheezing and breathing problems, lethargy)
- Rash if associated with a fever (children with fifth disease [Parvovirus B19] do not need to be excluded as they are no longer contagious once the rash appears)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has been started
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started
- Eye discharge-thick mucus or pus draining from the eye until evaluated by a health care provider
- Mouth sores with drooling until evaluated by a health care provider
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment is applied
- Chickenpox until all sores are dried and crusted
- Pertussis, until Health Department recommendations on returning to school are met
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of swollen glands
- Hepatitis A virus, until physician advises return (written release required)
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella, until 7 days after onset of rash
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to transmission of illness during an outbreak.

The goal of Dunsmuir Joint Union High School is to have all students who can benefit from educational instruction present in class. However, if the child is ill with a contagious disease that could potentially infect other students and staff, the educational process is compromised. Also, if a student has a temporary illness that impairs his ability to benefit from class instruction and that requires the attention of staff to care for him, the educational program is adversely affected for all students.

Sources:

Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs. Second Edition Washington, D.C.: American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics (2002).

Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide, 2nd Edition, (2009).

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