School and Illness Guidelines

These guidelines are to help you decide if you should keep your child home from school. Guidelines can vary from one school district to another. Follow your local guidelines. **Your child is too ill to go to school if they have any of the following:**

- Oral temperature above 100° F (37.8° C).
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Shortness of breath or wheezing with normal activities.
- Pain from earache, sore throat, or recent injury.
- So tired that she/she needs bed rest.
- A cough that interrupts activities or sleep.
- Pus that drains from the eyes.
- Rash of unknown cause.

Your child may return to school when well and when their oral temperature is below 100° F (37.8° C).

CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

Illnesses are catchy (*contagious*) when they can be passed from person to person or from an object to a person. Examples are: colds, runny noses, influenza, vomiting and diarrhea due to infections, strep throat, chicken pox and pink eye. Not all contagious diseases require the child to be kept home from school. Some common situations when children should stay home are:

- Children with strep throat or most other illnesses requiring medicine that kills germs (*antibiotics*) generally may return to school after being on antibiotics at least 24 hours and the child has a normal temperature when not on temperature controlling medicine. Check with your child's caregiver if in doubt.
- Children with whooping cough should receive 5 days of antibiotic before returning to school.
- Children with chicken pox may not return to school until all blisters have scabbed. If there are no blisters keep your child home until no new spots show up.
- Children with head lice or scabies should not go to school until treatment is started.
- Pink eye due to an infection with bacteria or viruses. A child with pink eye due to bacteria should not return to school until on antibiotic eye drops for 24 hours. Pink eye due to viruses should not keep an otherwise well child home from school. Your school may require an evaluation by a caregiver.
- A child diagnosed with an infection known as Community-Associated MRSA (methicillin resistant staph aureus) may return to school as your caregiver indicates.
- A child diagnosed with Mononucleosis (a common type of virus infection) who has fever. The child may return to school as your caregiver indicates. Even after returning to school, there may be a need to avoid sports activities. This should also be discussed with your caregiver.

School is important for normal development. It is important that your child not miss too many days a year from illness if possible. The child should not start thinking that staying home from school is their reward for simply feeling a little badly or tired. This can create poor health and behavior in a child. Children who are well enough for school activities should not be kept home for:

- Colds and coughs due to viruses.
- Fifth disease.
- Cold sores. (Should avoid direct contact as in wrestling, rugby, etc., until healed.)
- Ringworm fungus of the scalp that is being treated. Also untreated if no close body contact. Do not share combs, hats, hairbrushes, etc.
- Ringworm of other parts of the body treated or not. Children with athlete's foot fungus should not walk barefoot at school until treated.

Check with your caregiver if you are unsure if your child should stay home from school because of illness.

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