

6 September 2023

Dear parents and carers

'Life in all its fullness'

School attendance and mild illnesses: NHS guidance

I write to share that headteachers and trust leaders have today received information from Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, England, which provides school leaders with a clinical and public health perspective on mild illnesses and school attendance.

Professor Whitty writes that

It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above.

Professor Whitty has recommended that we share this NHS webpage with you: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-keep-child-off-school/) to help you decide whether or not to keep your child off school when they are unwell. As per NHS guidance, 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, please let your child's school know. We have summarised the advice from the NHS page below:

Illness	NHS advice about school attendance
Coughs and colds	Your child can attend school, 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 hands regularly.
High temperature	If your child has a high temperature of 38°C, keep them off school until it goes away.
Chickenpox	If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually 5 days after the spots first appeared.
Cold sores	There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore.
Conjunctivitis	You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis.
COVID-19	Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and they either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a high temperature • Do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities
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 and to wash hands regularly.

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Head lice and nits	There is no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat head lice and nits without seeing a GP.
Impetigo	If your child has impetigo, they will need treatment from a 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 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 2-3 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. Let the school know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.
Sore throat	You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. If they also have a high temperature of 38°C, keep them off school until it goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.
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 should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

The Attendance and Absence policy for children who attend a Three Spires Trust academy can be found by visiting this link: <https://tinyurl.com/TSTattendancepolicy>

School attendance is vital to improving the life chances of children and young people. Regular school attendance helps children not only to achieve academic success, but also to improve their wellbeing and socialisation.

If you have any queries about school attendance, please liaise with the attendance officer at your child's academy.

Your faithfully,

Sarah Milne

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