

A Note from your Bienville Parish School Nurse

Dear Parent,

Deciding when to keep your child home from school is not always easy. It's important for children to attend school, however, for some parents staying home with a sick child means missing work. When a child is truly sick, the best place for them is at home in the care of an adult. This will allow them the necessary time to get well and it will also prevent the spread of the illness to others.

The following information compiled from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may help you decide when to keep your child at home. The school health staff also uses these guidelines to determine when you will be called to pick your child up from school. This information applies to all school-aged children including adolescents. It is not intended to be inclusive of all illnesses or conditions that may indicate the need for your child to stay home from school. **This information does not take the place of a consultation with your medical provider.**

Everyday good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent the spread of illnesses like the flu. Here are some tips from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- Stay home from school, errands and work (if possible), when you are sick. You will not expose others to your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often! This will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Symptoms/illness	Defining characteristics	When to keep the child home	When to return to school	Additional tips
Fever	Temp of 100 F or higher Symptom of a contagious viral or bacterial infection	Children are likely contagious when experiencing fever.	Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine	Do not give them medication to reduce fever and send them to school. This will wear off and you will need to pick them up anyway.
Common cold	Contagious upper respiratory infection caused by a virus. May last for 7-14 days.	Fever. Deep uncontrollable coughing or significant lack of energy even without fever.	No fever, mild symptoms and otherwise feeling well.	Offer plenty of fluids. Coughing is important to move secretions out of the airways.
Flu (Influenza)	Highly contagious respiratory caused by the influenza viruses causing mild to severe illness.	May be contagious up to one week after symptoms appear. Fever and cough with documented flu.	Free from fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine.	Keep children with flu especially away from the elderly. See your medical provider for severe symptoms.

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Sore throat	Severe sore throat could indicate a contagious illness such as strep throat.	Severe sore throat caused by strep is a serious illness; untreated can cause serious complications. Other symptoms of strep throat are fever, headache or upset stomach.	If treated for strep, they may return after being on an antibiotic for at least a full 24 hours. Mild sore throat, no fever and otherwise feeling well may be fine to attend school.	Contact your medical provider if they also have a fever, headache or upset stomach as this could indicate strep throat.
Cough	Mild hacking cough is common after the first few days of a cold.	Fever. Deep coughing uncontrolled or significant lack of energy even without fever.	Fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine. No fever, mild symptoms and otherwise feeling well.	Coughing is important to move secretions out of the airways with a cold.
Diarrhea	Usually caused by a stomach virus.	3 or more watery stools in 24 hours.	Return when symptom free for 24 hours.	Promote good handwashing. Offer plenty of fluids
Vomiting	Usually caused by a stomach virus.	More than 2 episodes of vomiting in 24 hours.	Return when symptom free for 24 hours.	Can last for up to 12 - 24 hours. Observe for signs of dehydration (dry cracked mouth, lack of energy, decrease urination). Consult your provider for a stomach ache that is persistent or severe enough to limit activity.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address listed below.

School Nurse

Email

School Phone Number