

Policy for Dealing with Communicable Disease in the School/Day Care Setting

Controlling communicable disease in the day care and school setting is of utmost importance. Providing a safe, comfortable, and healthy environment facilitates the educational process, encourages social development, and allows children to acquire healthy attitudes toward organized settings.

Children who are ill or feel sick can create difficulties in group settings. An ill child often demands more attention from the teacher or caregiver and cannot fully participate in group or educational activities. Worse yet, the child with a communicable disease may spread the illness to others. This is especially true in the case of medically fragile children. Accordingly, it is essential that educators, parents, and day care providers control the spread of communicable disease by safe, effective, and practical efforts.

The following are conditions of special concern to us for which children should be kept home and when necessary, diagnosed and treated by a licensed clinician before returning to school or day care:

1. **Colds/Flu**

Children with coughing, sneezing, chills, general body discomfort, fatigue, fever, and discharge from the nose and/or eyes, should be kept home until fever is resolved for 48 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and any yellow or green drainage is resolved.

2. **COVID-19 – Don't hesitate, stay home when sick.**

A person testing positive for COVID-19 should stay home until:

- Symptoms are improving, at least 5 days has passed since symptoms first appeared,
- AND have no fever for at least 24 hours

In all cases, parents should follow the guidance of their doctor.

3. **Persistent Cough**

Cough lasting longer than 3-4 days especially if induces vomiting, passing out or a cough that is productive of colored sputum.

4. **Diarrheal Diseases**

An increase in the number of bowel movements compared with the child's normal pattern with watery or unformed stools which may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, headache, and/or fever should be resolved for at 48 hours before returning to school. If any kind of stool softeners (fleets, enema, laxative, etc.) are administered, please keep student home for at least 24 hours.

5. **Pinkeye or Conjunctivitis**

Symptoms of conjunctivitis include redness, discharge from eye, matted eyelashes, and burning or itching eyes and should be evaluated by a healthcare provider. The individual must have the symptoms resolved or be treated with a topical antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

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6. **Open wounds or sores**

Wounds that are open or draining should be kept covered with a dressing.

7. **Vomiting**

Must be free of vomiting for 48 hours prior to returning to school or 72 hours if norovirus is suspected.

8. **Strep throat or other bacterial infection**

Should be treated with an antibiotic for at least 24 hours, and fever-free for at least 24 hours.

9. **Temperature over 100.4**

Must be afebrile for 48 hours **without** the use of medicine that reduces fevers before returning to school.

10. **Skin Rash**

Presence of any skin rash that might be due to an infection should be evaluated by a healthcare provider or resolved before returning to school

It would be greatly appreciated if children with these problems could bring a note from their healthcare provider when they return to school.

Thank you for helping us care for and teach your children by providing for their medical needs. Please contact your school nurse with any questions.

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