

Guidelines for Keeping Children Home from School Due to Illness

A child who is ill is unable to perform well in school and risks spreading the illness to other children and staff. We have the following guidelines that will be useful to parents and guardians in determining when their child should stay home due to illness and when they can return to school.

Please note, 24 hours is counted from the last time the symptom was experienced. Symptoms must be improving overall. If the student is deemed too ill to be present in person, you may be called to pick them up.

The following guidance is meant to guide parents and school staff in determining whether students should attend school. This should NOT be used as a diagnostic tool. School Nurses CANNOT diagnose a student. However, they can make recommendations to have the student medical assessed by a doctor.

SECTION A

Symptoms	What is it?	Return to School Guidance
You should <u>NOT</u> send your child to school if they have the following symptoms/illnesses until criteria is met:		
Fever	Child's temperature is 100.4 degrees or higher. Fever is a symptom indicating the presence of an illness and potential contagiousness.	Can return once they feel well enough and have <i>been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever reducing medication.</i>
New vomiting/ diarrhea not caused by current medication or existing medical condition	New episodes of <u>vomiting</u> that are not typical. <u>Diarrhea:</u> Loose, watery stools that occur more frequently than usual. <i>Persistent vomiting and diarrhea may indicate the person has a gastrointestinal illness, such as norovirus or salmonellosis.</i>	Can return once they feel well enough and have been without vomiting, diarrhea, or fever for at least 24 hours without using <i>fever-reducing medication.</i>
Pinkeye (bacterial/viral conjunctivitis)	The white of the eye appears red, swollen, burns, itches or has pus-like drainage. Pus-like drainage is most common upon waking up from sleep. Typically starts in one eye and spreads to the other. This requires treatment from a doctor.	May return to school after starting an antibiotic treatment. <i>Doctor's note is requested.</i> See Section C for allergies (environmental conjunctivitis).
Impetigo / Skin infection	A skin rash that turns into fluid-filled blisters, which can open and become runny or crusty. Impetigo is highly contagious and requires treatment from a doctor.	May return to school after taking antibiotic treatment for 24 hours and if the rash is no longer draining.
New Skin Rash	New rash of unknown origin, that has blisters, draining, or is painful. Or if the rash is accompanied with fever. Or if the rash spreads to multiple areas on the body. Consult with healthcare provider to identify required treatment.	Keep child home until cleared by provider or until rash fully heals (e.g., no blisters, draining, or pain). Some skin rashes require starting treatment prior to returning to school.

SECTION B

Illness	What is it?	Return to School Guidance
You should <i>NOT</i> send your child to school if they have the following symptoms/illnesses until criteria is met:		
COVID-19	<p>A highly contagious respiratory illness. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, varying in severity from mild to severe.</p> <p>For more information visit our APS COVID-19 Updates + Alerts webpage: https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/covid</p>	<p>Remain at home until it's been at least 24 hours since</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your symptoms have improved overall, and ● You have not had a fever (<i>without using fever-reducing medication</i>).
Influenza (the Flu)	<p>A contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and fatigue are common. The flu can vary in severity.</p> <p>For more information, visit: https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/69098</p>	<p>Remain at home until it's been at least 24 hours since</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your symptoms have improved overall, and ● You have not had a fever (<i>without using fever-reducing medication</i>).
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)	<p>A contagious viral infection that primarily affects the respiratory tract, particularly in young children. Symptoms include cough, runny nose, fever, and difficulty breathing, with severe cases potentially leading to bronchiolitis or pneumonia.</p> <p>For more information visit: https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html</p>	<p>Remain at home until it's been at least 24 hours since</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your symptoms have improved overall, and ● You have not had a fever (<i>without using fever-reducing medication</i>).
Strep Throat	<p>The throat appears severely red, swollen or has whitish pus spots. Other symptoms may include, throat soreness, fever, swollen glands of the neck, nausea or vomiting. This requires treatment from a doctor.</p>	<p>May return after taking antibiotic treatment for 12 - 24 hours and no longer vomiting or feverish for 24 hours (<i>without using fever reducing medication.</i>)</p>
Whooping Cough (pertussis)	<p>Highly contagious respiratory disease characterized by severe coughing fits, often accompanied by a distinctive "whooping" sound during inhalation. Pertussis can affect people of all ages, especially infants.</p>	<p>May return after 5 days of prescribed antibiotic treatment.</p> <p><i>If untreated, child must remain home for 3 weeks after onset of cough.</i></p>

SECTION C

Illness	What is it?	Return to School Guidance
These symptoms do not automatically mean your child needs to stay home. However, our school district strongly encourages you to monitor your child and have your child seen by a doctor if <i>symptoms worsen or do not improve:</i>		
Allergies (environmental conjunctivitis)	Allergies may appear differently among individuals, but typically cause eyes that are itchy, swollen, pink, and runny (watery). Allergies rarely cause the same discharge or crusting seen in infectious pinkeye.	Allergies are typically managed with antihistamines, and do not require keeping students out of school. Student may attend if they feel well enough. The school nurse may recommend that the child be seen by a doctor if the condition is not improving or interrupting the child's ability to learn.
Common cold	Irritated throat, watery discharge from nose or eyes, sneezing, chills or general body aches. Seek care from doctor if symptoms persist beyond 7-10 days, fever or cough producing phlegm develops, or nasal discharge becomes yellow or green, or if trouble breathing.	Keep your child home if symptoms are serious enough to interfere with your child's ability to learn OR if your child's doctor recommends that they stay home.
Cough	Severe and persistent cough that interferes with child's ability to participate in classroom. Seek care from the doctor if cough lasts beyond 7-10 days, if coughing phlegm, if difficulty breathing, or if fever is developed.	Keep child at home if cough interferes with learning. OR if cough is related to a diagnosed illness (e.g., COVID-19, RSV, pertussis).
Pain	Pain involving headaches, stomachaches, toothaches, sore throat, or joint pain without other respiratory or GI symptoms. Consult with healthcare provider, if persistent pain or if new symptoms develop.	Child may remain in school if they are well enough to attend. School nurse may evaluate child to determine whether additional medical attention is needed based on symptom severity.
Existing or Common Skin Rash	Some skin rashes may be due to allergies or known health conditions (e.g., eczema) that are routinely treated by parent. Consult healthcare provider if skin rash is different or new symptoms develop.	These situations do not require child exclusion unless the child is unable to attend school due to discomfort.
Lice	Lice are parasitic insects that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people. Head lice are not known to spread disease, but can cause irritation and interfere with learning. Direct contact with infested individuals' hair and sharing combs, brushes, hats or bedding. Contact healthcare provider if lice becomes recurrent or persistent.	May continue to attend school if they have started treatment and have NO live insects on their head. Live lice should be combed out every morning per instructions indicated on the treatment box. The whole family may need to be treated to prevent reinfection.

Please note: if your child becomes ill at school or the school nurse feels the child is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious to other children, you will be called to pick them up from school. You may be recommended to take the student to the doctor for further medical assessment or intervention before they return to school.

Please make arrangements to transport your child home from school and that childcare is available in case of illness. It is essential that the school have a phone number where you can be contacted during the day and an emergency number in the event you cannot be reached. If your daytime or emergency phone number changes during the year, please let us know immediately.