



Medical Absence Guidance

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school, when they're unwell but there are [government guidelines](#) for schools and nurseries that say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school on the first day. Let them know that they won't be in and give them the reason. 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, let their tutor know.

Chickenpox

If your child has [chickenpox](#), keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared. Please let your child's tutor know.

Cold sores

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#). Encourage them not to touch the blister, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#). Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [cold](#). If they have a persistently high temperature and are feverish, keep them off school until the fever goes. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

Ear infection

If your child has an [ear infection](#) they can come to school, however if accompanied by a fever or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling well enough to return or their fever goes away.

Fever

If your child has a fever, keep them off school until the [fever](#) 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 straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. **See your local pharmacist who will be able to advise medication.**

Treatment is only needed if live lice are seen. Dimeticone, a silicone oil (like Hedrin) or malathion, an insecticide are recommended treatments. Alternatively, lice can be physically removed by combing through hair that has been lubricated with a conditioner using a fine-toothed detector comb.

Impetigo

If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll need antibiotic treatment from the GP. Keep them off school for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share towels or cups (or similar) 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 your 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 the GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics

Shingles

If your child has [shingles](#), they need to stay out of school if the rash is still oozing fluid (weeping) and cannot be covered, or until the rash has dried out. The rash is only infectious while it weeps.

Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)

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. If you suspect your child has slapped cheek syndrome, take them to the GP and let their school know if they're diagnosed with it.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#).

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 diarrhea

Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](#) should stay away from school for 2 days.

For further details see NHS guidelines

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/#coughs-and-colds>