

Health Guidance for Going to School



Showing up to school every day is critical for children’s well-being, engagement and learning.

Make sure to send children to school if they are:

- Generally healthy and well.
- Participating in usual day-to-day activities.
- Children can even go to school if they:
 - Have a mild cold, which may include a runny nose and/or cough.
 - Have eye drainage without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness.
 - Have a mild stomachache.
 - Have a mild rash with no other symptoms.
 - Have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Avoid keeping children at home unless they are too sick to participate. Please see the back of this handout for details. Note that in most situations, a health-care provider’s note is not needed to return, you can send a parent note.

Children may also avoid school due to anxiety (symptoms may include decreased appetite, feeling tired, stomachache, headache, etc). If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your child’s teacher, the school nurse, counselor or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child stay in school.

Please note: This document is not meant to take the place of local health department guidance about contagious illnesses such as Covid-19 and the flu.



Reasons to keep me home from school and what needs to happen before I can return

What is my symptom?	When should I stay home and when to seek medical care?	When can I return to school?
Fever	I have a fever of 100.0°F or higher. Seek medical care if I have fever and any of the following: ear pain, sore throat, rash, stomachache or tooth pain.	If I have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and I am feeling better.
Vomiting and/or diarrhea	If I have vomited 2 or more times in the last 24 hours. If my stool is watery and I may not make it to the toilet in time. Seek medical care if I have stomach cramping and fever, I have bloody or black stool, or I am showing signs of dehydration (tired and sleepy, dry mouth and not urinating at least once in the last 8 hours).	If I have not had vomiting and/or diarrhea in the past 24 hours and I am feeling better.
Persistent cough or trouble breathing	Seek medical care if I have a persistent cough, difficulty breathing or trouble catching my breath or if I develop a fever with the cough. These symptoms may be signs of a serious or contagious illness that should be evaluated by a health-care provider.	Once I am feeling better and I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider. If my symptoms were due to asthma, please make sure that I have my breathing medication available to use at school.
Rash	Seek medical care if the rash has blisters, is draining, is painful, looks like bruises and/or if I develop a fever	Once my rash has healed or I have been cleared for return by my health-care provider.
Eye irritation	Seek medical care if I have eye swelling, eye pain, trouble seeing or an eye injury.	Once I am feeling better.
Sore throat	Seek medical care if I have drooling, trouble swallowing or a fever and/or rash.	Once I am feeling better if I have been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. If I was prescribed an antibiotic by my health-care provider, then I may return 24 hours after the first dose.

If you don't know whether to send your child to school or have specific concerns regarding your child's health, contact your child's health-care provider, a local urgent care or the school nurse.