

Is my child too ill for school?



It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they are unwell. There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about managing specific infectious diseases at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home then it's important to phone school on the first day. Let them know that your child 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 headlice, let their teacher know.

Follow this advice for other illnesses

Coughs and Colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.

High Temperature

If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.

Chickenpox

If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all of the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots appear.

Cold Sores

There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone whilst they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

Vomiting and diarrhoea

Children with vomiting and diarrhoea should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 48 hours.

Head Lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat head lice without seeing a GP.

COVID 19

If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat or slight cough, and feels well enough then they can go to school. Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have a high temperature or if they do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities.

What to do if your child has tested positive

Your child is no longer required to do a COVID 19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after they took the test.

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.

Ear Infection

If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

Hand foot and mouth

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.

Impetigo

If your child has impetigo, they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics. Keep them off school until the sores have crusted over and healed, or 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage our child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups 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 a 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 a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Slapped cheek syndrome

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. But let the school know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But, if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away.
A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsilitis.

Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.