

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

Controlling communicable diseases 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. Respiratory infections: Colds, flu, COVID, RSV, strep throat, etc.
 - Fever if 100.4 or higher should stay home until fever is gone without use of fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours.
 - Persistent coughing or sneezing resolved or minimal before return.
 - Body aches resolved before return.
 - Unusual or excessive yellow-green drainage from the nose.
 - Strep throat or other bacterial ear, nose or throat infection requires medical evaluation and if confirmed on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before return.
2. Gastrointestinal illness/infection: Diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/cramping.
 - Frequent loose or watery stools (BMs) should have resolved for at least 24 hours before return.
 - Keep student home following use of an enema or laxative etc. for at least 24 hours.
 - Abdominal pain/cramping resolved for at least 24 hours before return.
 - Nausea/vomiting should have stopped for at least 24 hours before return.
3. Eye infections: Pink eye or conjunctivitis
 - Redness of eyes with draining, matted eyelashes, burning/itching requires medical attention; resolved or on antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours before return to school.

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4. Skin infection, sores, rashes or wounds

- Sores with crusting or draining particularly on the face require medical attention and if impetigo, must be on antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours before return to school.
- Wounds from an injury must be kept covered if wet or draining.
- A new rash over a large part of the body requires a medical evaluation and be resolved before return.
- Ringworm-like rashes need a medical evaluation and if fungal, be on antifungal treatments for at least 24 hours before return.
- Itching of the scalp with nits attached to the hair requires treatment for headlice before return.

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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