

Pulaski County Public Schools
Health and Safety Guidelines

In any public school setting, all of us are exposed to germs. One of the primary roles of the School Nurse is to support learning. The nurse accomplishes this by implementing assessment and interventions that promote student and staff health and safety. School nurses help identify and try to prevent the spread of diseases in the school setting. Students who are sick or getting sick may be contagious to other students and staff. For students who are sick or getting sick they need to stay home in the care of an adult to rest and prevent spreading illness to others.

Please keep the school office up to date with current phone numbers so you or an alternate contact can be reached if your child becomes ill or injured at school.

Please remember to call your child's school and report if your child will not be at school.

The following information may help you decide when to keep your child at home. This information does not take the place of consulting a medical provider.

Fever- fevers are a common symptom of viral and bacterial infections. Children are likely to be contagious to others when they have a fever. Please do not give your child fever reducing medicine and then send them to school.

When to keep a child home from school: any child with a fever of 100 degrees F or higher should not attend school and should not return until they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Vomiting:

When to keep a child home from school: any child who has been vomiting should be kept at home and should return to school only after being symptom-free for 24 hours.

Diarrhea: may be contagious. Any student who cannot contain feces in a toilet will be excluded from school to minimize the risk of fecal/oral transmission of disease to other students and staff.

When to keep a child home from school: Any student who has had diarrhea in the last 24 hours should be kept at home and should not return to school until being symptom-free for 24 hours.

Rashes: a rash may be one of the first signs of a contagious childhood illness. Rashes may cover the entire body or be in only one area. **If the school nurse does not know the cause of a rash the child will be sent home until we receive documentation from medical provider that the rash is not contagious.**

When to keep a child home from school: Do not send a child with a rash to school until a medical provider has said it is safe to do so-especially with additional symptoms like itching, fever or appearing ill.

Impetigo: is a contagious bacterial skin infection that usually begins with small fluid filled blisters that cause a honey-colored crust on skin after bursting. It is important to have these symptoms checked by a medical provider because untreated infection can lead to serious complications.

When to keep a child home from school: Do not send a child with impetigo to school until they have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.

Scabies: is an intensely itchy skin rash caused by a mite (small insect). The mite burrows into the skin and deposits its eggs. Scabies is highly contagious as long as the infected child is untreated.

When to keep a child home from school: Do not send a child to school with scabies until 24 hours of medical treatment has been completed. The school must receive written documentation from medical provider about child's treatment plan.

Ringworm: is a fungal infection of the skin. It is contagious to others as long as the fungus is present in the infected area. Viable fungus may persist on contaminated materials for long periods.

When to keep a child home from school: A child may come to school as long as infected area can be covered and student is being treated by a medical provider.

Headaches: A child whose only complaint is a mild headache usually does not need to stay home from school. Complaints of frequent or more severe headaches should be evaluated by a medical provider, including a vision exam if needed.

When to keep a child home from school: A child with a significant headache belongs at home until feeling better.

Sore Throat: A child with a mild sore throat, no fever and otherwise feeling well may attend school.

Strep Throat: A significantly sore throat may include fever, white spots in the back of the throat, headache, and stomachache. Strep throat is a contagious illness and if untreated can lead to serious complications.

When to keep a child home from school: Keep your child at home and contact a medical provider for a severe sore throat with any of the above symptoms. A child diagnosed with strep throat can return to school **24 hours** after antibiotic treatment has been started.

Stomach Pain:

When to keep a child home from school Consult a medical provider and do not send a child to school with a stomachache that is persistent or severe enough to limit activity. If vomiting or diarrhea occurs keep the child home until symptom free for 24 hours.

Toothache: For tooth pain, contact a dentist to have your child evaluated as soon as possible.

When to keep a child home from school: Keep your child home until evaluated by a dentist and feeling better.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMON COLDS AND THE FLU

COMMON COLD		FLU(INFLUENZA)	
The common cold is a contagious upper respiratory infection caused by cold viruses. It is the most frequent childhood illness. Symptoms can last 7 to 14 days. A child with no fever, mild symptoms and otherwise feeling well may be fine at school. When to keep a child home from school: A child with heavy cold symptoms such as deep or uncontrollable coughing or significant lack of energy belongs at home even without a fever.		The flu is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and can cause mild to severe illness. <u>A person with influenza can be contagious up to one week after symptoms appear.</u> Children are one of the biggest sources for spreading the flu. When to keep a child home from school: A child with flu-like illness (fever and cough) must stay home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication. A fever is defined as a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher.	
Symptoms	Usually come on gradually	Symptoms	Usually come on quickly
Fever	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high in Small children and infants.	Fever	Typically as high as 102 degrees F, but can rise to 104 and usually lasts 3 to 4 days.
Cough	Mild, hacking cough	Cough	Often, can be severe
Headache	Rare	Headache	Sudden onset, can be severe
Muscle aches	Mild	Muscle aches	Usual, can be severe
Tiredness/Weakness	Mild	Tiredness/Weakness	Can last 2 or more weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Extreme exhaustion	Sudden onset, can be severe
Vomiting/Diarrhea	Never	Vomiting/Diarrhea	Sometimes
Runny nose	Often	Runny nose	Sometimes
Sneezing	Often	Sneezing	Sometimes
Sore throat	Often	Sore throat	Sometimes

WHEN TO CONTACT A MEDICAL PROVIDER:

Be sure to contact a medical provider any time there is a concern about your child's health

In children, emergency warning signs for flu-like illness that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting

- Not waking up or interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Other reasons to contact a medical provider may include:

- When a child looks and acts really sick, with or without a fever
- Cold symptoms for longer than 10-14 days or getting sicker or a fever after the first few days
- Chronic coughing; uncontrollable coughing; wheezing
- Rashes; eye drainage; earache; toothache

Frequent Symptoms: Sometimes children pretend or exaggerate illness in order to stay home. However, frequent complaints of tummy aches, headaches, and other symptoms may be a physical sign that a child is feeling emotionally stressed, a common experience even in children. Consult a medical provider to evaluate symptoms. Stressed-based complaints cause some children to unnecessarily miss school. It is important to check often with your children about how things are going at school. Share concerns with school staff so they can provide support for you and your child to help make attending school a positive experience.

Healthy Habits to Stay Well and Prevent Spreading Germs

- ❖ **Wash your hands often with soap and water especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.**
- ❖ **Avoid touching our eyes, nose or mouth to help prevent the spread of viruses.**
- ❖ **Don't share food, utensils, beverages or anything that might be contaminated with germs.**
- ❖ **Try to avoid close contact with sick people**
- ❖ **Stay home when sick, especially with flu-like symptoms of fever and cough. Stay home for at least 24 hours after being fever free without the use of fever reducing medicine.**
- ❖ **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.**
- ❖ **Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or elbow instead of your hands if you don't have a tissue.**
- ❖ **Clean surfaces that may be contaminated with germs using household disinfectant cleaners.**
- ❖ **Get a flu shot every year to help prevent seasonal flu.**

Revised: June 13, 2018