

## **Is My Child Well Enough to Come to School?**

School attendance is important for effective learning and uninterrupted academic development. Most children, unless they have a specific medical problem, should only miss a few days of school a year. It is important to notify the school nurse if your child suffers from a medical problem, particularly if it will impede his/her school performance or attendance. Absences should be reported to the Attendance Office. Communicable diseases and hospitalizations should also be reported to the nurse. We recognize that missed school work may be an inconvenience to make up; but in the best interest of all of our students we ask that you use good judgment in keeping your ill child home.

Most school-age illness is secondary to viral infection and not life threatening unless the child is immunologically compromised. Your child should stay home for at least 24 hours if he/she:

- has had a fever of 100 degrees or more, and should remain at home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal.
- has vomited or has had diarrhea, and should remain at home for 24 hours after it has stopped.
- has a persistent cough.
- has any rash.
- has open or draining skin sores.
- has inflamed or draining eyes or ears.

Severe pain, infections and rashes also warrant medical consultation. Purulent drainage from the eyes or ears or large wounds is significant of infection. Over-the-counter remedies may improve their discomfort but if symptoms persist or are severe consult your physician. Recurring symptoms also warrant physician follow-up. If you have any questions feel free to contact the school nurse during working hours.

A common problem in the Health Office is transportation home for sick children. Your child needs parent permission to leave school when ill, and it is also your responsibility to arrange transportation. In medical emergencies that necessitate paramedic transportation to the hospital the nurse will coordinate. This explains why it is so important to keep your emergency number(s) up to date.

If your child is not feeling his/her best they will not receive the most from his/her education. A balanced diet and adequate sleep are good health habits to teach and model for your children. The amount of sleep affects the way we feel, perform, think, learn, and remember. A balanced diet including 6-8 servings of fruits and vegetables and the basic food groups is important for growth and development. Frequent hand washing is our first defense against disease and protects us from surface bacterial and viral infections. Our physical health is also dependent upon good mental health, and functional coping skills and a positive attitude reinforce our immunological response.

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