Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

HEALTHY SANDWELL

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Sickness Absence in Schools

A Guide for Staff



Most children with mild illness can attend school providing that they feel well enough. In limited circumstance as child can present an infection risk to other pupils and staff. This guidance is designed to help school staff determine when a child should be absent for public health reasons.

Infections can be passed from person to person resulting in infection and disease. Infections can spread easily in “closed” environments such as schools are due to the number of people together in close proximity. The spread of infection can be prevented or reduced by measures such as:

- Routine immunisation (vaccination)
- High standards of personal hygiene, especially hand washing
- Maintaining a clean environment

In some situations children or staff with certain infections should not attend school to reduce the risk of spread to others. This guidance is designed to help parents and staff in those circumstances.

The below advice is based on national Public Health England guidance, and your individual school policy may differ.

Condition	Absence Advised	Length of absence from school	Comments
Headache Earache Stomach ache	No	None	Paracetamol and fluids should be adequate Seek medical advice if persists or is unusually severe
High temperature	No	None	If a rash is present, seek medical advice from GP or NHS Direct before attending school. A high temperature can be draining and the child may not feel well enough to attend
Coughs and colds	No	None	
Sore throat and tonsillitis	No	None	
Head lice	No	None	
Warts and varrucae	No	None	Varrucae should be covered with a waterproof plaster
Conjuctivitis	No	None	Encourage the child not to touch their eye and to wash hands frequently
Flu	Yes	Until recovered	Flu is highly infectious and can be dangerous to the vulnerable. Flu vaccine is available to certain cohorts
Diarrhoea and vomiting caused by infection	Yes	Until 48 hours after the last symptom	Most cases will be caused by viruses such as norovirus. Other infections are less common, but may require longer absence.
Scabies	Yes	After the first treatment	Everyone living in the same household will need to be treated at the same time
Impetigo	Yes	Until lesions have healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotics	
Measles	Yes	Must be absent for four days after the rash has appeared	Measles is highly infectious and can be dangerous to vulnerable adults and children who haven’t been vaccinated. Measles can be prevented through the MMR vaccine
Chickenpox	Yes	Until the vesicles have dried over	
German measles	Yes	Must be absent for four days after the rash has appeared	German measles (Rubella) can be prevented through the MMR vaccine.
Mumps	Yes	Must be absent until 5 days after the swelling started	Mumps can be prevented through the MMR vaccine
Whooping cough	Yes	Until the child has taken 5 days of antibiotics or if not taking antibiotics, 21 days	Whooping cough can be prevented by vaccine
TB	Yes if pulmonary	Not all types of TB are infectious	Local Health Protection team will be able to advise

Remember that you can contact the School Nursing Service for advice, particularly if a child has on-going health need that is affecting their attendance.

The Sandwell School Nursing Service can be contacted on 0121 612 2974 or email BCHNT.SHNSANDWELL@nhs.net

Website: www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/children-and-young-people/services-parent-portal/school-health-services-school-nursing/sandwell-school-nursing/

Further advice can be found from NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

For further more detailed information including advice on diseases / conditions not covered here see Public Health England's guidance: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522337/Guidance_on_infection_control_in_schools.pdf

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