



Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell.

There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about [managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK](#). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone school on the first day. Let us know that your child won't be in and give us 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 head lice, please let us know.

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.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

HIGH TEMPERATURE

If your child has a [high temperature](#), keep them off school until it goes away.

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 [tonsillitis](#).

COLD SORES

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#).

Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

VOMITING AND DIARRHOEA

Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](#) should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

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.

COVID-19

It is no longer required for you to test your child for Covid-19 and school will not ask you to do this. If you choose to do a test and it is positive and your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school. If they have a high temperature or do not feel well enough they should stay at home until they feel better.

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.

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

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.

HEAD LICE AND NITS

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

You can treat [head lice and nits](#) without seeing a GP.

IMPETIGO

If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics.

Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

Encourage your 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 (fifth disease)

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 or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

THREADWORMS

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [threadworms](#).

Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

CHICKEN POX

If your child has [chickenpox](#), keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.