

Waynesboro Public Schools
Health Services

Guidelines for Keeping Ill Children Home from School

Early in the morning, it is often difficult to decide whether or not your sick child can attend school. Often, the way a child looks and acts can make the decision for you. Two major considerations are whether the child is comfortable enough to be able to participate fully in the school day and whether the child might spread a contagious condition to other children and staff. Please consider these guidelines:

- **Fever** Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or more should remain home until they have been without a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine.
- **Diarrhea/Vomiting** Students should remain home until 24 hours since their last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
- **Cough/Cold/Runny nose** Colds are usually self limiting and children may attend school if they have a normal temperature and are feeling well enough to attend and participate. The child should not have ear pain, severe sore throat or difficulty breathing. Coughing or runny nose associated with seasonal allergies or mild colds are not reasons to miss school.
- **Conjunctivitis** A child with conjunctivitis or “pink eye” should not return to school until the drainage and redness have resolved or they have started treatment with antibiotic eye drops.
- **Rashes** The source of a rash is often difficult to determine. Many common infectious diseases are most contagious in the early stages. A child with a serious rash should be evaluated by the primary health provider before returning to school. Mild rashes associated with contact allergies, eczema, or other chronic skin conditions should not prevent the child from attending school. Rashes that are blistered or draining should be evaluated by the child’s primary physician.
- **Lice** If the child has active lice, he/she may return to school once they have been treated (proof of treatment should be sent with child) and evaluated in the school clinic and found to be free of live lice. The presence of nits does not prohibit the child from attending school, but should be addressed by combing with a comb specifically designed to remove nits.
- **Strep** The child may return to school when they feel able to participate, are free of fever and have been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

Here are some tips to keep you and your child healthy and to manage those occasional illnesses that occur:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before eating and after sneezing or coughing
- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when you cough or cough into your elbow or sleeve.
- Develop good health habits in regard to hygiene, diet and sleep.
- Dress child appropriately for weather.
- Make sure that the school has parent contact information during the school day.
- If a child is going to need medication during the day, make sure the medication forms and medication in the original containers are taken to clinic on the day the child returns to school.

If you have any doubt about a child’s illness, you should always contact your child’s physician.