

Minor illness and school attendance

A guide for all parents and carers of children attending Hillingdon schools and academies



If you keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school on the first day to let them know that your child will not be in and provide the reason.

Is my child well enough to attend school?

High temperature

If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it has returned to normal..

Chickenpox

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.

Cold sores

There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister, kiss anyone, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis

You do not need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist.

COVID-19

If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school.

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

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

There are government guidelines for schools about managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK. These say when children should be kept off school and when they should not.



Ear infection

If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they are feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

Hand, foot and mouth disease

If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease but seems well enough to go to school, there is no need to keep them off.

Head lice

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

Impetigo

If your child has impetigo, they will 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.

Ringworm

If your child has ringworm, see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP. It is fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

Scarlet fever

If your child has scarlet fever, they will need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Without treatment, your child will 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 do not need to keep your child off school if they have slapped cheek syndrome as once the rash appears they are no longer infectious. But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. However 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.

Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist who can recommend a treatment.

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.

Some common rules about illness absences**Minor illness**

If your child is unwell on a school day, please always contact the school in the morning to let them know.

Longer-term absence

If your child is absent from school for three or more days, or is often absent for short spells, the school may ask you to present medical evidence to verify the reason for absence. A letter from a parent is needed when:

- a child has any condition requiring hospital or surgical care
- the child returns to school with a cast or stitches
- the child needs restricted PE lessons or playtime activities for more than three consecutive days.

In cases of concern, school or parent can ask for the advice of the school nurse, who may visit the child either in school or at home if necessary.

Children usually feel much better with a dose of paracetamol and once in school actively learning with their peers often forget aches and pains.

Children may exaggerate their symptoms to avoid a particular lesson or if they are feeling tired.

Schools' welfare staff will always contact you if your child needs to go home early.

Repeated headaches or upset stomachs should be checked with the GP. Generally healthy and robust children will not experience repeated symptoms.

Attendance Support officers or the school can seek your permission to contact your GP for a report on your child's condition if necessary.

When deciding whether your child needs to stay at home, work on the basis that sick children belong at home and well children belong in classroom.

Please remember that early morning aches often pass, so do not keep your child at home 'just in case' when they could be learning in class. If you are not sure, check the guidance in this leaflet or on GOV.UK. For further advice you could talk to a member of the school staff, your doctor or the school health staff.

School records and contact details

Please make sure that the contact details the school has are current and up to date.

It is important the school is able to make contact with you during the day if your child is not well enough to stay in school or in case of an emergency.

Our contact details

✉ Attendance Support team,
Hillingdon Council,
4E/09 Civic Centre,
High Street,
Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

☎ 01895 250858

@ attendancesupport@hillingdon.gov.uk

Other useful contacts and information

NHS Direct (available 24hrs for you to find out more about illnesses, operations, tests and treatments).

☎ 111

☎ 01895 891302 (school nurse)

🌐 www.hillingdoncyp.cnwl.nhs.uk

🌐 Meningitis: www.meningitis.org