

Sick Day Guidelines: Making the right call when your child is sick

### **Should I keep my child home or send him to school?**

If your child has been running a fever (over 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit) , **keep your child home until her/his fever is within normal limits for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, like tylenol, or ibuprofen.**

If your child has been vomiting or has had diarrhea, **keep your child home for 48 hours (2 days) after their vomiting or diarrhea has stopped.**

Does your child have symptoms that prevent him/her from participating at school, such as:

#### **-excessive fatigue or lack of appetite?**

Returning to school too soon can slow the recovery process, and expose others to unnecessary illness.

#### **-productive cough or sneezing?**

Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours

#### **-Headaches, Body Aches, Ear Aches or Sore Throat?**

A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be Strep Throat, even if no fever is present. Other symptoms that could indicate strep throat in children are headache and upset stomach. Contact your healthcare provider if you suspect that your child has Strep Throat, your child will need a special test to determine what is wrong.

### **How do I know if my child has the Flu?**

The Flu is a serious illness. Contact your Healthcare Provider at the first signs of Flu symptoms, **which usually come on very suddenly, fever, chills, headache, body aches, ear aches, nausea or vomiting, or a dry cough.** Your child's Healthcare Provider can prescribe medication that lessens the symptoms of the flu within the first 48 hours of the illness.

### **What can I do to make my child feel better?**

Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest and puts limits on watching TV. Encourage your child to drink a lot of fluids, like water, soup, jello, juice and ice. Help your child relax by reading a story, and giving lots of TLC. Consider using a cool mist humidifier to help add moisture to the air to soothe stuffy noses and sore throats. When used as directed, children's cough and cold medicines help to relieve symptoms while your child is recovering. Be sure to read and follow the directions on the medications, carefully. Only give the exact recommended dose for your child's age and weight. **Do not use over the counter cough and cold medication for children under the age of four years old.**

### **How can I prevent my child from getting sick?**

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently using plenty of soap and warm water. Proper handwashing technique should take about 20 seconds, or the time that it takes for you to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- Teach your child proper sneeze and cough etiquette. Cover all coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the elbow area of their sleeve. Hands should be washed after any nose blowing or wiping, or any sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Minimize the time your child spends with other children who have cold and cough symptoms.
- Pack easy-to-use products like disinfecting wipes, and hand sanitizers in your child’s backpack to use when at school.
- Be sure that all of your child’s immunizations are up to date. The CDC guidelines now recommend a flu vaccine for most children ages 6 months and up to their nineteenth birthday.
- Be sure to eat a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. Increase your fluid intake to stay hydrated.
- Keep your child’s environment tobacco free.
- When your child is feeling better, clean all surfaces, wash bedding, and air out the room.

If you have any questions about your child’s illness, consult your Healthcare Provider or the school nurse.