

From the School Health Office

631-665-5873

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME WITH ILLNESS DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

Sometimes it can be difficult for a parent to decide whether to send children to school when they wake up with symptoms of an illness or complaints that they do not feel well. The following are a few situations that warrant keeping your child home and calling your health care provider:

- Persistent fever greater than 100.4° orally, including a fever that requires control with medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen
- Child is too sleepy or ill from an illness, like vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Cough that makes a child feel uncomfortable or disrupts the class
- Sore throat that is severe along with fever and feeling ill for more than 48 hours, OR after known exposure to a confirmed case of Strep throat infection
- Honey-crusted sores around the nose or mouth or rash on other body parts; OR a rash in various stages including boils, sores and bumps that may be chicken pox; OR a significant rash accompanied by other symptoms of illness such as fever
- Red, runny eyes that distract the child from learning
- Large amount of discolored nasal discharge, especially if accompanied by facial pain or headache
- Severe ear pain or drainage from the ear
- Severe headache, especially if accompanied by fever
- Any condition that you think may be serious or contagious to others.

If your child starts to develop symptoms, please have them examined by their doctor or a health-care provider. Be sure to ask your provider when it is safe for your child to return to school, both for your child's health and for the health of the rest of the school.

Remind your children to discard used tissues promptly, not to share personal items, to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, to keep their hands away from their face, and to wash hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water.

Finally, if you know your child is still running a fever, it is not a good idea simply to give them Tylenol and send them onto school because as soon as the medicine wears off, you will get a call from the school nurse to leave work and come to pick up your feverish child. It is better to let them stay home in bed with a fever and take their medications at home until they are off all medicines and ready to learn for a full day in a classroom. Please **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL UNTIL THEY ARE FEVER-FREE FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS WITHOUT MEDICATION.** Returning to school too quickly may result in the spread of illness as well as delay your child's complete recovery.