



## School and Child Care Illness Policy

### General Exclusion Requirements

Children and staff must be excluded from schools and child care facilities when they have certain symptoms of illness, including if they are unable to participate or perform the functions required for their position.

- A “child” means any child enrolled in the child care program or a student at a school.
- A “staff member or staff” means any person working or volunteering to perform duties in a child care facility or school.

Symptoms that require exclusion are listed in the attached document, *How Sick is Too Sick? When Children and Staff Should Stay Home from Child Care* (How Sick is Too Sick). The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s *Infectious Diseases in Child Care and School Settings* (Infectious Disease Guide) will be used to determine exclusion for symptoms of illness not included in How Sick is Too Sick.

### Excluding Children

Staff are responsible for observing children at drop off and throughout the day for signs of illness. If a child arrives at the facility or school with signs of illness that require exclusion they may not be accepted. If a child develops symptoms of illness that require exclusion during the time of care, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. The child will be provided with a place to rest which is separate from the other children until the parent/guardian arrives. The child may return to child care or school based on the requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, or as directed by their health care provider or public health professional.

Information will be recorded on an illness log when children are sent home due to symptoms of illness that require exclusion. All items used to care for the child (cot, bedding etc.) will be cleaned and sanitized or cleaned and disinfected if contaminated by body fluids after the child leaves the child care or school. The date and time when the child returns to the child care facility or school will be recorded on the illness log.

### Excluding Staff

The person in charge of staff is responsible for observing the staff for signs of illness throughout the day. Staff members have the responsibility of reporting, to the person in charge, any signs of infection or illness that may pose a hazard to the health of children and other staff. If a staff member is not well enough to work they may return based on the requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, or as directed by their health care provider or public health professional.



## **Outbreaks**

When a school or child care facility has a child or staff member with an illness that is required to be reported to the health department, the health department will be contacted immediately. Outbreaks of illness must also be reported to the health department when there is a larger number than normal of children or staff ill with the same symptoms. For example, above normal seasonal absenteeism for a school or child care facility would be concerning and the health department will be contacted. The health department will also be contacted when there are two or more people that do not live together who are ill with symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice.

## **Food Handling Staff Exclusion Requirements**

Special attention will be given to staff members that handle food because many illnesses can be spread through food from an infected person. Food handling activities include preparation of any food (i.e. washing, cutting, cooking, and portioning), the mixing and feeding of bottles, and feeding infants and toddler's solid foods. Food handling staff must notify the person in charge:

1. If they exhibit any of the following symptoms:
  - a. Vomiting;
  - b. Diarrhea;
  - c. Jaundice;
  - d. Sore throat with fever; or
  - e. Any open or draining wound that is not covered with a water proof bandage and is:
    - i. On the hands or wrists\*;
    - ii. On any exposed portions of the arms; or
    - iii. On other parts of the body.

\* In addition to water proof bandages covering wounds on hands and wrists, single service gloves must be worn at all times when handling food.

2. Has an illness diagnosed by a health care provider due to:
  - a. Norovirus
  - b. Hepatitis A virus
  - c. Shigella
  - d. Shiga Toxin Producing Escherichia Coli (e-coli)
  - e. Typhoid fever (caused by Salmonella Typhi) or
  - f. Salmonella
3. Has been exposed to, or is the suspected source of, a confirmed disease outbreak or living in the same household as someone who works or attends a setting where there is a confirmed outbreak.

Staff will be allowed to return to work based on requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, as directed by the health department, or as directed by a health care provider, or public health professional.



## How Sick is Too Sick?

### When Children and Staff Should Stay Home from School or Child Care

There are three main reasons to keep sick children and adults at home:

1. The child or staff member does not feel well enough to take part in usual activities. For example, a child is overly tired, fussy or will not stop crying.
2. A child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.
3. The symptom or illness is on this list, and staying home is required.

Remember, the best ways to stop the spread of infection is through good hand washing and staying home when sick.

Symptoms	Child must stay home?
<b>Diarrhea</b> Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine.	<b>Yes</b> - if there are other symptoms along with the diarrhea (such as vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, jaundice, etc.), the diarrhea cannot be contained in the toilet, there is blood or mucous in the stool, the child is in diapers or the staff member handles food or bottles. Children and staff may return 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea unless the diarrhea is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer.
<b>Fever</b> Fever with behavior change or other illness. Babies who are 4 months or younger need to see a doctor right away for a fever of 100°F or higher.	<b>A child should not be excluded if they have a fever with no other symptoms unless they are 4 months old or younger.</b> <b>Yes</b> - if there is also a rash, sore throat, throwing up, diarrhea, behavior changes, stiff neck, or difficulty breathing.
<b>"Flu-Like" Symptoms</b> Fever over 100°F with a cough or sore throat. Other flu symptoms can include tiredness, body aches, throwing up, and diarrhea.	<b>Yes</b> - for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone. The fever needs to be gone, without using medicine that reduces the fever (acetaminophen or ibuprofen).
<b>Coughing</b>	<b>Yes</b> - if the coughing is severe, uncontrolled, or the child has wheezing, rapid or trouble breathing. Medical attention is needed for wheezing, rapid or trouble breathing. <u>Note:</u> Children with asthma may go to school with a written health care plan and the school is allowed to give them medicine and treatment.
<b>Mild Respiratory or Cold Symptoms</b> Stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, and mild cough.	<b>No</b> - children and staff may go to school if they able to take part in usual activities. Children and staff should stay home if the symptoms are severe. This includes fever and if a child is not acting normally and/or has trouble breathing.
<b>Vomiting/Throwing Up</b> Throwing up two or more times in the past 24 hours, there are other symptoms in addition to the vomiting (such as fever, diarrhea, etc.).	<b>Yes</b> - until 24 hours after throwing up stops or a doctor says it is not contagious. If a child has a recent head injury, watch for other signs of illness and for dehydration. Adults who handle food and bottles must be excluded.

See second page for a list of illness that may require children or staff to stay home.



Illness	Child must stay home?
Chicken Pox	Yes - until the blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
Conjunctivitis (pink eye) Pink color of eye and thick yellow/green discharge	No - children and adults do not need to stay home unless they have a fever or are not able to participate in usual activities. Call your doctor for advice and possible treatment.
Croup (see Coughing)	Call your doctor for advice. <u>Note:</u> Children and staff may be able to go to school unless they are not well enough to take part in usual activities.
Fifth's Disease	No - the illness is no longer contagious once the rash appears.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus)	No - unless the child or adult has mouth sores, is drooling and is not able to take part in usual activities.
Head Lice or Scabies	Yes - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment.
Hepatitis A	Yes - until 1 week after the illness starts and when the child or staff is able to take part in normal activities. <b>Children and staff should not go to another facility during the period of exclusion.</b>
Herpes	No - unless there are open sores that cannot be covered or there is nonstop drooling.
Impetigo	Yes - children and adults needs to stay home until antibiotic treatment has started.
Ringworm	Yes - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment. Keep the area covered for the first 3 days if participating in sports with person to person contact.
Roseola	No - unless there is a fever or behavior changes.
RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	No - children and staff can go to school unless they are not well enough to take part in usual activities and/or they have trouble breathing. Call your doctor for advice.
Strep Throat	Yes - for 12 hours after starting antibiotics unless the doctor says that it is okay to return to school sooner. Children and staff also need to be able to take part in usual activities.
Vaccine Preventable Diseases Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes - Children and staff can return to school once the doctor says they are no longer contagious.
Yeast Infections Thrush or Candida diaper rash	No - follow good hand washing and hygiene practices.
Other Symptoms or illnesses not listed	Contact the child care center director or school health staff to see if the child or staff member needs to stay home.

This was developed in collaboration with the Children's Hospital of Colorado School Health Program. The information presented is intended for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of your personal doctor's advice and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information should not be used in place of a visit, call or consultation or advice of your doctor or other health care provider.

#### References

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide*. Aronson SS, Shope TR, eds. 5th ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2020:20.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. *Infectious Diseases In Child Care and School Settings: Guidelines for Child Care Providers and Health Consultants, School Nurses and Other Personnel*. 2019.