

## Our contact details:

### School Health Service

School nurses and their teams can be contacted via the email or telephone number below:

### School Nursing Service

Highbury Grange Health Centre  
1-5 Highbury Grange  
London  
N5 2QB

Tel: 020 3316 8001

Email: [whh-tr.IslingtonSchoolNursing@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.IslingtonSchoolNursing@nhs.net)

### Education Welfare Service

For all Education Welfare Service enquiries contact:

Tel: 0207 527 5833

Email: [ews@islington.gov.uk](mailto:ews@islington.gov.uk)

### Other useful contact and information:

**NHS Direct** (Available 24 hours for advice)

Tel: 111

Website: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)



## Improving Pupil Attendance in Islington



## Minor Illness and School Attendance

### A Guide for Parents/Carers

## Introduction

It is very important that children and young people attend school as much as they can so that they are prepared for adult life.

The most common reason given for children to miss school is illness, however most of the time when children are only mildly unwell they can continue to attend school.

To help avoid unnecessary school absences, Islington School Nursing have produced this leaflet as a general guide to help you decide whether your child is well enough to attend school.

If your child has a long term illness, you should discuss this with your doctor and the school. Usually it is possible to arrange medication so that it is not taken during school hours. School staff may need to be made aware of the illness so that if it causes problems while your child is at school, they know how to deal with them.



## Some common rules about illness absences

### Minor Illness

If your child is unwell and they are likely to be infectious or they won't be able to cope with lessons, they may need to stay home for a short period. If you are going to keep your child off school, you should always contact the school in the morning to let them know, why your child will not be coming to school. This needs to be recorded in the class register and if the illness is infectious, other parents may need to be informed.

### Longer Term Absence

If there are concerns about your child's repeated absence from school, the school will refer your child to the school nurse and/or may ask you to present medical evidence giving the reason for the absences. A letter from you is needed when:

- Your child has any condition requiring medical care.
- Your child returns to school with a cast, crutches, stitches, etc..
- Your child needs restricted PE lessons or playtime activities for more than three days in a row.

If your child has seen their GP or been to hospital, please follow the recommendations of the doctor on when your child can return to school.

If your child is absent for a long time, Medical Needs Tuition (home tuition) may be offered.

### When a Parent or Sibling is Ill

You should make alternate arrangements to get any well children to school. Family illness is not usually considered a good reason for school absence.

Developing good family or parent networks can be helpful as ***schools will not usually authorise absence due to parental illness***. Please discuss any difficulties with the school as they may be able to offer support.

### Rashes

A rash could be one of the first signs of many childhood illnesses, such as chicken pox or measles. The rash or 'spots' may cover the entire body or just appear in only one area.

Do not send a child to school with an unexplained rash or skin eruption that may be infectious, until you have consulted your doctor or they are better.

### **Toothache, headache or tummy ache**

If your child has a persistent tooth or ear ache, they need to see a dentist or doctor without delay.

If the only complaint is slight headache, your child will not usually need to be kept at home.

If your child complains of repeated mild tummy ache, headache or other symptoms and does not want to attend school, this could be due to your child being unhappy at school e.g. bullying or finding school work difficult. Speak to your child, the teacher or school nurse to discuss this and find ways of dealing with it.

### **Vomiting and Diarrhoea**

If a child is vomiting or has diarrhoea keep them off school and ensure adequate fluid intake. Children can return to school 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

Seek medical advice if your child does not improve as you expect.

### **Sore Throat**

If your child complains of a slight sore throat and has no other symptoms, they are fit to go to school.

If the sore throat occurs with a raised temperature, they need to stay at home.

### **Punctuality**

Establishing good habits is important. Ensure that your child goes to bed early as lack of sleep will affect his/her ability to function in the morning, leading to lateness.

### **Medical Appointments**

Where possible, please arrange doctors', dentists', opticians' appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, your child should attend school for the remainder of the day.

### **Medication in School**

Your child does not need to be kept at home, just because they are taking medication. If your child needs to take prescribed medication during the school day, please talk to the school staff about this. Each school will have a policy for management and administration of medicines and they may wish to discuss this with the school nurse.

### **Health Tips**

To ensure that your child is happy, healthy and able to participate fully in school activities, your child should:

- Be registered with a GP.
- Have regular checks with their dentist.
- Have all the childhood immunisations recommended by the Department of Health.
- Have a healthy diet and exercise.
- Get enough sleep i.e. go to bed on time.
- Have regular checks for head lice every 2 weeks and using the wet combing method.

You should:

- Work closely with lead professionals and others where children have special needs to ensure their needs are met.
- Try to attend medical appointments outside school hours if possible.
- Speak to school staff or the school nurse if you have any concerns about your child.

### **General Information**

Please remember that early morning aches and pains often pass, so don't keep your child at home 'just in case' when they could be learning in class.

When you send your child to school with minor aches or pains, tell the school staff and they will phone you if your child continues to have symptoms.

If you are not sure, check the guidance in this leaflet. For further advice you could talk to a member of the school staff, your doctor or the school nurse.

## Your contact details

Please make sure that the telephone contact details the school has are up to date. It is important that the school is able to make contact with you during the day if your child is not well enough to stay in school.

**The following table provides guidance on some common childhood illnesses:**

Illness	Recommendations
Chicken Pox	Children can return to school 5 days from onset of the rash.
Conjunctivitis	No need to be off school.
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	Children can return to school 48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. They can usually go swimming on return to school. If not, your doctor will tell you.
Flu (Influenza)	Children should return to school as soon as they have recovered.
German Measles (Rubella)	Keep off school for 6 days from onset of rash.
Glandular Fever	No need to be off school.
Head Lice (Nits)	No need to be off school.
Impetigo	Keep off school until lesions are crusted or healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment, whichever is shorter.
Measles	Keep off school for 4 days from onset of rash.
Molluscumcontagiosum	No need to be off school.
Mumps	Keep off school for 5 days from onset of swollen glands.
Ringworm	It is not usually necessary to keep off school.
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment.
Threadworms	Children should attend school.
Warts and Verrucae	Children should attend school.
Whooping cough	Five days from starting antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment has been given.

\*All information taken from Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Other Child Care Settings (HPA 2010)

## Is my child well enough to attend school?

Your child should only be kept away from school if they have an infectious illness, need care during school hours that cannot be carried out in school or are not able to cope with lessons. Many children experience common ailments from time to time. Most of these do not need a prescription, are rarely serious, do not require a visit to your doctor and do not require time away from school. Often treating your child's illness yourself, or with advice and medicines from your pharmacist, can be the quickest and easiest way to deal with it.

***Schools may not agree to authorise your child's absence for minor illnesses and you have a duty to ensure your child is not absent where this can be avoided.***

## Raised Temperature (fever)

If your child is shivery or feels hot, they may have a raised temperature. This may be due to a variety of reasons. If your child has a raised temperature (over 37.5°C), they should not be in school. It is important to measure the temperature accurately with an appropriate thermometer.

However, your child should be able to return to school once they feel and look better.

## Colds and Coughs

A child may attend school with a slight cold and cough.

If your child has asthma, remember they may need their blue inhaler more often. They should have a spare which they can use when they are at school.

Occasionally, coughs can be persistent and last for weeks.

Children with bad or long-lasting coughs need to see their GP. Once treated or when the cough is controlled or disappearing and the child is feeling better, they need to return to school.