

My child has been ill – when can I send them back to school?

Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [common cold](#). But if they have a fever and are not well enough, keep them off school until the fever goes.

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's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#). Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#). Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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

If they have mild symptoms and they feel well enough, they can still go to school.

Ear infection

If your child has an [ear infection](#) they can be in school. However, if they have severe earache and a high temperature, keep them off school until they're 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's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat [head lice and nits](#) without seeing a GP.

Impetigo

If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll 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. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

Ringworm

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

Scarlet fever

If your child has [scarlet fever](#), they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll 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 don't need to keep your child off school if they have [slapped cheek syndrome](#), because once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. If you suspect your child has slapped cheek syndrome, take them to see a GP and let their school know if they're diagnosed with it.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#). But 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 for 2 days after their symptoms have gone. If children have only vomited once this is probably not caused by a bug and children can go back to school the next day.

How to treat a [high temperature](#).

- give them plenty of fluids
- look out for [signs of dehydration](#)
- give them food if they want it
- check on your child regularly during the night
- keep them at home
- give them either [paracetamol](#) or [ibuprofen](#) if they're distressed or unwell – check the packaging or leaflet to make sure the medicine is suitable for your child, or speak to a pharmacist or doctor if you're not sure
- get medical advice if you're worried about your child
- try to keep your child at home and avoid contact with other people until they do not have a high temperature