

Sickness Policy

Introduction

All children will experience some level of sickness from time to time. Sickness in settings where there is a group of people together can be problematic as it can result in the sickness being passed from person to person. Such situations can often mean that the illness lingers within a setting for much longer than it should. While sickness is a part of growing up it can create special concerns for parents of children with special needs and for the staff working with them. This policy was drafted in consultation between teaching staff and school nurse in Oct 2016. It has been reviewed periodically since then, however, in light of the current pandemic and government guidance, significant changes have been made.

According to current HSPC guidelines if you are in doubt whether your child is well enough to attend or if they require paracetamol, ibuprofen or any other medication to reduce temperature, they must be kept at home to observe any emerging condition and should be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning to school.

Sickness

Where a child is absent from school for whatever reason, parents must furnish school with a note explaining the reason for absence. A template will be provided for this purpose (see Attendance Policy These will be kept on file by the secretary together with the roll book and the information will be used to complete student absence report forms for the Túsla – the Child and Family Agency. Further copies of the form are available in reception, alternatively, you can ask the class teacher via Class Dojo to send forms home . Please note that the Board may request that the child's medical practitioner provide a letter stating that they are fit to return to school.

Infectious or communicable illnesses

The school seeks to promote and encourage good health and hygiene for all the children in its care. This includes monitoring the children for signs and symptoms of communicable illnesses, eg. Covid 19, diarrhoea, vomiting, eye infections and measles etc. If your child has an infectious illness please inform us in order that staff can be vigilant for signs of transmission. Exclusion periods for childhood illnesses vary and this information is available from your GP, alternatively the HSE guidelines on the management of infectious disease in schools can be accessed at

http://www.hpsc.ie/AZ/VaccinePreventable/Polio/Guidance/File_14304,en.pdf.

Guidelines of management of Covid 19 in schools can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/educationguidance/>

Infographic for parents on when child can return to school after infection or communicable illness can be found at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/childcare/whenshouldmychildreturntoschoolchildcare/>

However, if there is an outbreak of any illness that is highly contagious the exclusion periods will be extended.

In the school setting, there is always the possibility of cross infection between children, from children to staff and from staff to children. Should a child become ill in our

care, the parents will be notified immediately. If the school principal, or a staff member working on behalf of the principal, feels that the child should be sent home, the parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child. In the case of severe illness or accident, the school will ring an ambulance immediately (except in the case of a pre-existing medical condition for which there is an in-school care plan previously signed and agreed by the parents), and inform parents of this course of action.

Please see the school Covid Response Plan for the actions to be taken in the event of a suspected case of COVID 19 in school

In the case of your child suffering from any of the following, please do not bring them into school.

Sticky eye (Conjunctivitis) – This is a highly infectious condition. If it is noticed in school it is school policy to request parents to seek treatment. Exclusion is not generally indicated but in circumstances where spread within the class or school is evident it may be necessary to recommend exclusion of affected pupils until they recover, or until they have had antibiotics/eye drops for 48 hours.

Diarrhoea and/or Vomiting – Where an infection is suspected or confirmed, the child should be excluded from contact with others at the school. The child should not be returned to school until 48 hours after the diarrhoea or vomiting have completely stopped. Exemptions will be made where children may be taking medication for pre-existing conditions which may result in loose bowel motions, or where bowels are loose as the norm.

High temperature- Children should never come into school with a temperature. When a child develops a temperature while in our care, parents will be contacted immediately. As long as the child is not significantly ill, first aid measures will be taken to cool the child, such as the removal or loosening of excess clothing and the provision of cool drinks (See Admin of Medication) until the child is collected.

COVID-19 – Current guidelines below, may be updated in line with current public health advice

Pupils should not attend school if they

- Have symptoms of Covid and feel unwell (if a runny nose or sneezing is the only symptom, they are fine to come into school)
- Have a high temperature of 38 degrees celsius or higher
- Have a positive COVID test result – they should stay at home for 3 full days
- Have diarrhoea and are aged 12 or younger

It is Ok to send your child to school if they

- Only have nasal symptoms and are otherwise well
- Have not had any new symptoms for 48 hours
- Have not had diarrhoea for 48 hours

Rash – In the absence of a temperature, a rash may be nothing to worry about. Where a rash exists in an ill child, medical help should be sought immediately and the rash should be confirmed non-contagious or non-infectious before the child is returned to the school setting.

If a non-blanching rash of small red-purple spots or bruises, in addition to a fever, headache or vomiting develops, an ambulance will be called before contacting parents.

Chickenpox-When the lesions have scabbed over, it is acceptable for the child to return to the school. This is usually between seven and ten days from the commencement of the illness. Any staff member who is pregnant or who thinks they may be pregnant should see their doctor if they think that they may have been in contact with a child with chicken pox or rubella.

A standard letter with specific details of a condition and advice for parents will be sent home where the school has been informed of a case of one of the following conditions:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Chickenpox
- Head Lice
- Measles
- Mumps
- Ringworm
- Rubella
- Scabies
- Scarlet fever
- Strep Throat
- Threadworms
- Viral meningitis
- Whooping Cough

Medication – Children taking antibiotics should not attend until 24 hours after the treatment began and then only if they are actually getting better. Where a child is taking prescribed medication as treatment from their doctor, the medication will be administered at school only with written permission from the parents and with clear directions for administration (For further procedure to be followed see Administration of Medications policy). Parents must supply said medications in labelled containers with instructions for administration clearly printed on them. This medication must be stored in a locked cupboard in the office of the school nurse. With the exception of Calpol, Nurofen and Zirtek, medication of any form not prescribed by a doctor, such as cough mixtures and throat lozenges, will not be given to the children by any staff member. The school wishes to stress the importance however, of notifying the school if any medications were given to the child prior to their arrival in school. Only children of parents who have signed the permission slip will be administered medication.

Documents consulted in relation to the formation of this policy include:

Management of infectious disease in schools HSE

Management of chronic health conditions in school

Health and Safety at Work Act 2005

HPSC Guidance

Please read this policy in conjunction with the school Sickness and Administration of Medication Policies

Ratification and Communication

This policy on **Sickness** was reviewed and re-ratified at the Board of Management meeting held on **8th May 2024**. It will be communicated to parents via hard copy, and will form part of the school plan, and is readily available to view on request. It will also be included as part of the parent pack for new students.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management in the school year 2027/28 or as experience dictates.

Signed by Principal _____

Signed by Chairperson of the Board _____

Date: _____