

I'm Sick, Do I Have To Go To School Today?

When your child asks you that, wouldn't it be nice to be able to answer objectively? Well there are some **guidelines** to help parents make that decision. Dr. Maritza Irizarry, a pediatrician, says that "although sometimes it seems very inconvenient and impractical for us as working parents, there are times when we have to keep our children out of school to protect them and others."

Children should stay home when they don't feel well enough to participate in normal activities or lack sufficient alertness to learn or play. Here are some definite guidelines:

- vomits twice or more over a 24 hour period
- registers an oral temperature greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (must be fever free for 24 hours without Fever reducing meds to return to school per policy)
- has an uncontrollable, phlegm-laden cough
- has prolonged or serious difficulty breathing
- produces repeated bouts of diarrhea or bloody stools
- exhibits abdominal pain for more than two hours
- has open sores on the mouth
- displays a unknown skin rash
- shows symptoms of contagious diseases such as chickenpox, German measles, hepatitis, impetigo, measles, mumps, shingles, strep throat, or whooping cough. Children can receive vaccinations against some, but not all of these diseases.
- reddened eyes with swelling, itching, burning matter in eye and crust on eyelids
- becomes infested with head lice or scabies
- abrupt onset of fever, chills, headache and sore muscles and unusual tiredness
- sore throat with fever, red throat and pus spots on back of throat

Ear infections aren't contagious, so if a child isn't in much pain, going to school is OK

There are things we as parents can do to help. Kids Health, School Network for Absenteeism Prevention suggests:

- Teach your kids when and how to wash their hands.** A thorough hand washing after going to the bathroom and before eating will cut down on colds, diarrhea and other common childhood illnesses.
- Teach your kids not to share-certain items, that is.** Sharing food is dangerous for others allergic to certain foods. Sharing water bottles, pens and other personal items spread germs. Lice are passed easily via hats and hair accessories.
- Communicate current information with your school office.** Please make sure current phone numbers (home, work and cell) are available in the event that they must call you in an emergency. Communicate with the school nurse regarding any special health needs, either temporary or ongoing.
- Schedule annual physical exams** and don't wait too long to make a doctor's appointment when illnesses develop in between yearly visits.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep.** Aim for nine to 13 hours a night, depending on their age.

Our North Fork family appreciates your diligence. Staying healthy is a common goal!! Students cannot learn if they are not here. Thanks for helping us stay healthy!

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