

# Minor illness and school attendance

## A guide for parents



In Hillingdon, the Participation team works closely with School Health and many other agencies to ensure that children and young people can benefit from all the educational opportunities available to them.

To achieve this aim, we also work in partnership with parents and schools to make sure all our pupils attend as fully as possible.

We have found a number of children missing school due to assumed illness. We need the support of all parents to tackle this trend.

To help avoid unnecessary school absences while promoting child welfare, Hillingdon Participation team has produced this leaflet as a general guide to help parents decide whether your child is well enough to attend school.

### Is my child well enough to attend school?

#### **Raised temperature**

If your child looks or feels shivery, unusually cold or hot, they may have a raised temperature. This may be due to a variety of reasons. If your child has a raised temperature, they should not be in school.

However your child should be able to return to school 24 hours after they feel and look better.

#### **Cold and cough**

A child may attend school with minor cold and cough.

However, children with bad or long-lasting coughs need to stay at home. When the cough is disappearing and the child feels better, they need to return to school.



## Rashes

A rash could be the first sign of one of childhood's many 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 until you have consulted your doctor.

## Minor aches and pains

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

A child whose only complaint is minor headache does not usually need to be kept at home.

## Vomiting and diarrhoea

If you think your child has meningitis, seek help from your doctor or hospital immediately.

If vomiting occurs, keep your child at home until they can keep food down. A child with diarrhoea should also be kept at home.

Consult your doctor if your child does not improve as you expected.

## 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.

## Some common rules about illness absences

### Minor illness

If your child is unwell on a school day, please always contact the school in the morning to let them know.

### Longer-term absence

If your child is absent from school for three or more days, or is often absent for short spells, the school may ask you to present a doctor's note to verify the reason for absence. A letter from parent is needed when:

- a child has any condition requiring hospital or surgical care
- the child returns to school with a cast or stitches
- the child needs restricted PE lessons or playtime activities for more than three consecutive days.

In cases of concern, school or parent can ask for the advice of the school nurse, who may visit the child either in school or at home, if necessary.

Don't forget – children usually feel much better with a dose of Calpol. When in school, in the busy environment of active learning and friendships, children often forget aches and pains.

Schools' welfare staff will always contact you if your child needs to go home early.

It is not unheard of that children exaggerate symptoms to avoid a particular lesson, or are feeling tired – don't get caught out.

Repeated headaches or upset stomachs should be checked with the GP. Generally healthy and robust children will not experience repeated symptoms. Participation officers can seek your permission to contact your GP for a report on your child's condition if necessary.

## Good common sense

Use good common sense when deciding whether your child needs to stay at home.

Work on the basis that sick children belong at home and well children belong in classroom!

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

## Your contact details

Please make sure that the contact details the school has are current and 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.

## Our contact details

✉ Participation team  
London Borough of Hillingdon  
4E/09 Civic Centre  
High Street  
Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

☎ 01895 250858

@ participationteam@hillingdon.gov.uk

## Other useful contacts and information

NHS Direct (available 24hrs for you to find out more about illnesses, operations, tests and treatments).

☎ 08454647

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

🌐 Meningitis: [www.meningitis.org](http://www.meningitis.org)