

Pupil Illness Policy



Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians

Parents are asked not to send their child/ren to school if any of the following apply:

- The child has symptoms of an infectious illness that is mentioned in the list of 'Common Ailments requiring Pupils to Stay at Home' at the back of this policy (Appendix 1) or in HSE Publication: 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School – 2014', Chapter 9.
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/schoolhealth/File,14304,en.pdf>
- The child does not feel well enough to participate in the normal programme of curriculum activities.
- The child requires more care than the classroom team is able to provide without affecting the health, safety and schoolwork of the other pupils.
- If antibiotics are prescribed for a contagious illness or infection, the child should not attend school until 24 hours after treatment has begun and must be showing signs of improvement.
- If headlice or ringworm is noticed, the child may not come to school until treatment has begun. See the end of Appendix 1 at the back of this policy.
- Pupils and staff with gastrointestinal illness (i.e. diarrhoea and/ or vomiting) for example, should not return to school until they are at least

48 hours symptom free.

- In the case of pupils with colds as evidenced through infected (green) mucus discharged through a phlegmy cough and/or runny nose medical advice should be sought and the child should not return to school until the discharge is clear. Returning earlier than this may spread infection to other children and staff which could re-infect your child.
- If a child has been sent to school and is clearly unwell, as described above, a parent or guardian will be asked to collect him/ her from school as soon as possible.
- Parents should not send any medication (over the counter or prescribed) into school with their child without prior arrangement with the school. As per our school Administration of Medicines/Allergy policy, school personnel do not take responsibility for administering medication to pupils.

Pupil Absence - Informing the School

Parents/Guardians must contact the school office stating the reason for the child's absence.

This is very important for the following reasons:

- If a child has an illness which is recognised by HSE as an infectious disease, staff, other parents/guardians or the authorities may need to be notified. It is vital that information about an infectious disease is passed to the school as soon as possible so that we can notify any vulnerable student/staff member and any pregnant staff member.
- The National Educational Welfare Board requires the reason for an absence to be recorded on the school's attendance database.
- Child absences may affect how staff members are assigned during the school day.

Returning to school

A pupil who has an infectious ailment, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy cold, should remain at home until they are no longer infectious. The length of time before return will depend on the ailment and on the treatment. Guidelines in Appendix 1 at the back of this policy, or in 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School' (Chapter 9), should be followed. For some infectious diseases, the school may require a doctor's 'fitness to return' note before the child is allowed to come back to school.

Collecting child when ill

If the school secretary, class teacher or the Principal contacts a parent/guardian to say that their child is presenting as ill and is not well enough to be at school, or travel home on school transport the parent/guardian must arrange to collect the child as soon as possible. This is primarily for the well-being of the child who is unwell. In the case of infectious diseases, it is also very important for the well-being of the other pupils and the school staff. Classroom staff will aim to keep the child as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/guardian to arrive.

Responsibility of the School:

If a child feels unwell or appears unwell, on arrival at school or during the school day, the procedures at the back of this policy, in Appendix 2, will be followed for the well-being of the child who is sick and of all members of the school community.

On an ongoing basis, Darver NS aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. These practices will be taught as part of the SPHE curriculum and will be consolidated throughout the school day. They will include:

- Teaching and implementing effective handwashing throughout the school, with staff leading by example

- Teaching and implementing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, e.g. to cough/sneeze into the elbow, sanitise hands after a cough/sneeze.
- Facilitating the Schools Immunisation Programme
- Provision of gloves, aprons, suitable sanitising cleaning products and cleaning equipment for staff who are in contact with bodily fluids when caring for a child.

Ratification and Review:

This policy was ratified by the BoM in June 2023. It will be reviewed in the event of a change in circumstances and as/when the need arises.

Signed *Ann Geary*
Chairperson, Board of Management

Emily Scully
School Principal & Secretary, Board of Management

Date *16th June 2023*

Appendix 1

Common Ailments requiring Children to Stay at Home or to Visit GP

CHICKEN POX: The child should not attend school until all scabs are dry and crusted. This is usually 5-7 days after the appearance of rash.

DIARRHOEA: When your child has had diarrhoea due to infection, he/ she should only return to school once 48 hours have passed following the last loose bowel movement. For example, if your child has his/her last loose bowel movement at 11 am on Sunday morning, he/she cannot return to school until Wednesday morning.

VOMITING: As in the case of diarrhoea, the child should remain at home until 48 hours have passed since the last episode of vomiting due to infection.

FEVER: The normal body temperature is 36.5 to 37.2 C. If the child develops a temperature, she/he should remain at home until 48 hours after the fever has passed.

HEAVY COLD SYMPTOMS OR FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS: e.g. large amount of yellow-green nasal discharge, phlegmy cough, runny nose, sleepiness, ear pain and/or fever. Medical advice should be sought and the child should not return to school until the discharge is clear and they are able to participate in the normal school curriculum.

MILD COLD SYMPTOMS: If a child's mild cold symptoms would prevent him/her from participating in normal school curriculum, e.g. significant weariness at onset, streaming watery discharge from nose, persistent cough, he/she should be kept at home until they are 48 hours symptom free and are able to participate in the normal school curriculum.

CONJUNCTIVITIS: inflammation of the lining of the eye and eyelid, causing sore or red eyes; can be highly contagious if bacterial or viral. Children with red eye/s and a watery or sticky discharge must be evaluated by a doctor, who will advise about returning to school – at least 24 hours after start of treatment, perhaps until fully recovered.

IMPETIGO: The fluid inside the blisters is very infectious. The child should be taken to the doctor who will advise about returning to school, usually when blisters have dried and healed or a minimum of 24 hrs after commencing antibiotics.

Common Conditions requiring Immediate Treatment

HEAD LICE: It is important to avoid contact between an affected child and others. If parents/guardians notice head lice, or are advised that they have been noticed in the child's hair at school, treatment must begin before the child returns to school. So long as the treatment begins before bed-time, the child may attend school the next day.

RINGWORM: A child with suspected ringworm should be taken to their GP and, if ringworm is confirmed, treatment should begin as soon as possible. Once parents/guardians attend to this, the child may return to school.

Appendix 2

Internal School Procedures when Child is Unwell:

If a class teacher is concerned that a child is unwell, she/ he will inform the Principal.

The class teacher and/or Principal will speak to the child about how they are feeling to assess whether they are fit to remain in school or whether parents/guardians need to be contacted. At all times teachers will use their best judgement when making a decision on the child's fitness to remain at school.

If the child needs to go home because they may have an infectious illness, or are too unwell to participate in school activities, parents/guardians will be contacted to collect the child.

In the case of a child who is unwell and is awaiting collection, staff will ensure that the child is supervised, reassured and made as comfortable as possible.

If the child has a suspected infectious condition:

- further contact with other children will be limited by moving the child to the waiting area beside the office.
- all other necessary precautions will be taken to limit the spread of infection, i.e. careful hand-washing and use of suitable sanitising cleaning products, as required