

## Our contact details

ACE team

020 8753 2877

## Other useful contact information

**NHS Direct**

(Available 24 hours for you to find out more about illnesses, operations, tests and treatments)

Website:

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

Website for meningitis:

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

- A**ttendance (statutory)
- C**hild employment and entertainment
- E**lective home education and children missing education

# Minor sickness and school attendance

A guide for parents/carers

## Introduction

There has been a steady increase in the number of children missing school on account of assumed illness. We need the support of all parents and carers to tackle this trend.

To help avoid unnecessary school absences while promoting child welfare, the ACE team has produced this leaflet as a general guide to help parents decide whether their children are well enough to attend school.

## Is my child well enough?

### High temperature

If your child looks or feels shivery or is unusually cold or hot, he or she may have a high temperature. There may be various reasons for this. A child with a high temperature should not be in school. However after feeling and looking better for 24 hours, a child should be able to return to school.

### Cold and cough

A slight cold and a cough do not disable a child from attending school. However children with heavy colds or persistent coughs should stay

at home. A child whose cough is disappearing and who is feeling better should 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 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

A child with persistent toothache should see a dentist without delay and one with earache should see a doctor without delay.

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

### Vomiting and diarrhoea

If you think your child has meningitis, get help from your doctor or a hospital at once.

If vomiting occurs, your child should stay at home until he or she 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 expect.

### Sore throat

A child who complains of a slight sore throat and has no other symptoms is fit to go to school.

A sore throat with a high temperature is an indication that the child should stay at home.

### Common sense

Use this 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 class!

Please remember that early morning aches often pass, so don't keep your child at home "just in case" when he or she 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 NHS Direct at the number below.

### Your contact details

Please make sure that the school has these up to date.

It is important that school staff can contact you during the day if your child is not well enough to stay in school.

## Some common rules about illness absences

### Minor illness

If your child is unwell on a school day, always contact the school in the morning to let staff 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 staff may ask you to present a doctor's note to verify the reason for the absence. A letter from a parent/carer 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.