



# Birley Primary Academy

A L.E.A.D Academy

**Headteacher:** Dawn McAughey

**Address:** Thornbridge Avenue,  
Sheffield, S12 3AB

**Telephone:** 01142399002

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Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parent or Carer,

As we have welcomed children back to the academy for a new school year, we have been asked by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide you with a clinical and public health perspective on mild illnesses and attendance.

It has been recognised nationally that the COVID-19 pandemic may have caused some parents to feel less confident with assessing whether their child is well enough to be in school so the Department for Education wanted to lay out information for parents and carers that they will find helpful when assessing whether your child is well enough to attend school.

There is wide agreement among health and educational professionals that school attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Being in school improves health, wellbeing and socialisation throughout the life course; therefore, the greatest benefits come from children and young people attending school regularly.

Therefore, it is agreed that it is appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. For more detailed information, have a read through the guidance provided below:

## **Is My Child Too Unwell for School?**

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school, nursery or playgroup when they're unwell. There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about managing specific infectious diseases and this informs educational settings about when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

Follow this advice for the following illnesses:

### Coughs and Colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

### High Temperature

If your child has a high temperature, classed as 38°C or above, **keep them off school** until it goes away.

### Chickenpox

If your child has chickenpox, **keep them off school** until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.



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## Cold sores

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

## Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

## COVID-19

If a child or a close family member tests positive for COVID-19, children are no longer required to self-isolate. If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school. Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with others **if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and a high temperature** until the temperature drops. Absences related to COVID will be now be marked the same as any other illness and these absences will affect attendance percentages.

## Ear Infection

If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, **keep them off school** until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

## Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

## Head Lice

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat head lice and nits without seeing a GP.

## Impetigo

If your child has impetigo, they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics. **Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.** Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

## Ringworm

If your child has ringworm, see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.



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## Scarlet Fever

If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. **Keep them off school** until 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

## Slapped Cheek Syndrome

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have slapped cheek syndrome because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

## Sore Throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they have a high temperature and a sore throat, they should stay at home until the high temperature goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.

## Threadworms

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

## Vomiting and Diarrhoea

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting **should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days** (48 hours).

## What shall I do if I need to keep my child off school?

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school on the first day of absence. Let them know that your child won't be in and provide us with the reason for absence. You need to do this on each day of your child's absence. If we are not provided with a reason for absence, absence will not be authorised. Further to this, it may result in our safeguarding staff carrying out a home visit so that we can complete a safe and well check.

I hope this letter supports parents and carers with their understanding of whether their child or children need to be absent from the academy and our academy's absence procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn McAughey  
(Headteacher)