

WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL?

It can be hard to tell if your child can go to school or needs to stay home. During these times of COVID, we must approach illness symptoms carefully. Here are a few tips to help you make the best decision.

Fever A temperature that is 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, will be considered a fever. Children with fever should always be sent home and obtain a COVID test. Children need to be fever-free (without fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours before sending them to school.

Colds A runny nose by itself is not necessarily cause to keep your child home. If your child has a mild runny nose for less than 24hours it is acceptable to send them to school. However, if the runny nose is accompanied by other symptoms or the child is too tired to concentrate on schoolwork or unable to manage their secretions, he/she should not attend school. If the runny nose persists for longer than 24hours or is accompanied by other symptoms, a COVID test should be obtained. Also consider the color of the nasal discharge. A clear discharge is usually seen in allergies or at the onset of a viral infection. A bacterial infection can produce yellow or greenish colored discharge from the nose. Many children suffer from chronic low-grade sinus infections that hang on for months if untreated. Their symptoms include fatigue, sore throat (especially first thing in the morning), headache, and stomachaches.

Vomiting/Diarrhea Anytime a child has persistent vomiting and/or diarrhea, he/she needs to be isolated from other children for 24 hours after the last episode. If symptoms persist longer than 24 hours, please obtain a COVID test.

Rash Any rash of unknown cause should be considered contagious. Please have your child examined by a physician to determine the cause and communicability of the rash before sending him/her to school. The child may not return to school unless there is a letter from a medical professional stating that the rash is not communicable in nature, or unless the rash is no longer present.

What if they feel worse at school? It is not unusual for students to feel better in the morning and then worse as the day goes along. The school is not equipped for prolonged care of a sick child. We require that you or an emergency contact will pick up your sick child within an hour if you are called. It is important for the school to have a list of local emergency contacts that are available to pick up your child in the event that we are not able to reach you. Please notify the school if there are changes to your contacts.

Symptoms lasting less than 24 hours: Specific symptoms, if lasting less than 24 hours, do not require a COVID test and the child can return to school if feeling well enough. These symptoms are fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, congested nose and nausea. If your child has more than one of these symptoms or they persist for longer than 24 hours, a COVID test should be obtained.

Symptoms always requiring a COVID test: fever, chills, coughing and/or loss of taste or smell.

For other specific diseases or health difficulties it is always a good idea to contact the nurse. I can be reached by phone or email kathyw@hcabothell.org. My office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00-2:45. I am here as a resource to all of our HCA families to keep everyone healthy.

Kathy Wells, RN (HCA School Nurse)

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