

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING CHILDREN HOME FROM SCHOOL DUE TO ILLNESS

**\*\* PLEASE KEEP THESE GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE REFERENCE \*\***

Flu and cold season are now approaching, and your School Health Care Team is aware that it is sometimes difficult to decide when and how long to keep an ill child home from school. The timing of the absence is often important in order to decrease the spread of disease to others, and to prevent your child from acquiring any other illnesses while his/her resistance is lowered. The following guidelines represent the more common childhood illnesses and the usual recommendations for school and daycare:

**COMMON COLD:** Irritated throat, watery discharge from the nose and eyes, sneezing, chills and general body discomfort. Your child should remain home if symptoms are serious enough to interfere with your child's ability to learn. Medical care should be obtained if symptoms persist beyond 7-10 days, if fever develops, or if discharge becomes yellow to green.

**FEVER:** If your child's temperature is 100 degrees or greater (or 1-2 degrees above the child's normal temperature), he/she should remain home until he/she has been **without fever for a full 24 hours**. Remember, fever is a symptom indicating the presence of an illness.

**FLU:** Abrupt onset of fever, chills, headache and sore muscles. Runny nose, sore throat, and cough are common. Your child should remain at home until symptoms are gone and the child is **without fever for a full 24 hours**.

**PINKEYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS):** A viral or bacterial infection of the eye causing redness and swelling of the membranes of the eye with burning or itching, watery or thick drainage, or crusting on the eyelids. Your child should remain home from school **until receiving 24 hours of antibiotic therapy and until discharge from the eye has stopped**. In the case that your physician believes it to be a viral infection and no antibiotic therapy is prescribed, your child is still contagious and should remain at home until drainage has ceased. Spread of the infection can be minimized by keeping the hands away from the face, good hand washing practices, and not touching any part of the eye with the tip of the medication applicator.

**STREP THROAT AND SCARLET FEVER:** Strep throat usually begins with fever, sore and red throat, pus spots on the back of the throat, and tender, swollen glands of the neck. Scarlet fever is indicated when a red skin rash and/or strawberry appearance of the tongue are present along with the other symptoms of strep throat. High fever, nausea and vomiting may also occur. Your child should remain home from school **until receiving a full 24 hours of antibiotic therapy and until he/she has been without fever or vomiting for a full 24 hours**. Most physicians will advise rest at home for 1-2 days after a strep infection. Antibiotics ordered for strep infection should be taken for 10 days or until the medication is gone. Only when these directions are followed correctly is the strep germ completely eliminated from the body, no matter how well the child feels after the first few days of receiving medication.

**VOMITING AND DIARRHEA (INTESTINAL VIRAL INFECTIONS):** Stomach ache, cramping, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, possible fever, headache, and body aches. Your child should remain at home **until without vomiting, diarrhea or fever for a full 24 hours**. If your child has had vomiting, diarrhea or fever during the night, he/she should not be sent to school the following day.

