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

**PLEASE KEEP THESE GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

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 in lowered. The

following guidelines represent the more common childhood illnesses and the usual

recommendations of the School Nursing Services.

**CHICKEN POX:** A skin rash consisting of small, itchy blisters that leave scabs. There may be

blisters and scabs all present at the same time. A slight fever may or may not be present. Your child

should remain home until all blisters have scabbed over, usually 5-7 days after the appearance of

the first crop of blisters. Even if your child has received the chicken pox vaccine, there is still a

slight chance he/she may get a mild case.

**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, fever develops, or 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

24hrs. 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 24hrs.

**HEAD LICE:** Lice are small grayish-tan, wingless insects that lay eggs called nits. Nits are much

easier to see and detect than lice. They are small white or gray, teardrop-shaped specks which are

firmly attached to the hair shaft. They are usually found at the nape of the neck, behind the ears,

and at the crown of the head. Your child should be treated with a lice-killing shampoo. Instructions on how to properly treat head lice are available and should be followed carefully to eliminate possible re-infestation and to minimize your child’s absence from school. If your child is excluded from school due to head lice, he/she must be checked by the nurse or other school personnel before returning to class.

**IMPETIGO:** Blister-like lesions that later develop into crusted pus-like sores, most commonly

located around the nose and mouth. Your child should remain home from school until receiving

24hrs of antibiotic therapy and sores are no longer draining.

**PAIN:** If your child complains of, or behavior indicates that he/she is experiencing persistent pain,

he/she should be evaluated by a physician before being sent to school.

**PINKEYE (CONJUCTIVITIS):** 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 24hrs of antibiotic therapy and

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.

**RINGWORM:** A fungal infection that causes a flat, red, ring-shaped rash which may itch or burn.

Your child should remain at home until receiving 24hrs of anti-fungal treatment.

**SKIN RASHES:** Skin rashes of unknown origin should be evaluated by a physician before your child

goes to school. Assuming that a rash is not contagious can lead to the spread of the condition to

others.

**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 24hrs of antibiotic therapy and until without

fever or vomiting for 24hrs. 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 24hrs. If your child has had

vomiting, diarrhea or fever during the night, he/she should not be sent to school the following day.

**CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN FOR THE MOST ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS**