

Dear families,

Many parents ask, "When is my child sick enough to stay home from school?" This is not always an easy question to answer! We hope that these tips can help!

A child who is sick will not be able to perform well in school and is likely to spread the illness to other children and staff. We suggest making a plan for childcare ahead of time, so you will not be caught without a comforting place for your child to stay if he/she is ill.

Our school policy states that you should not send your child to school if he/she has:

- Fever in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Strep Throat (must have been taking an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
- Bad cold, with a very runny nose or bad cough, especially if it has kept the child awake at night
- Influenza or flulike illnesses
- Acute Bronchitis
- Head lice – until your child has been treated according to the nurse or doctor's instructions

If your child has any of the illnesses listed above, please make sure to see your pediatrician or primary care physician as soon as possible. Your child must bring a note stating that he/she can return to school.

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Even though children inevitably swap germs in the crowded indoor environment of school, we can all do a few things at home to minimize the damage and spread of germs:

- **Immunize.** There's a reason that vaccines are required for school attendance. It's because they're an effective way to prevent some serious, potentially life-threatening diseases.
- **Wash your hands regularly.** Good hand washing is probably the best way to limit the spread of disease. Hand sanitizer is okay for most germs, but soap and water are more effective against many viruses. It doesn't have to be antibacterial soap, and it doesn't have to be hot water. Teach your children how to wash properly: Scrub both sides of their hands and between their fingers for at least 20 seconds. Dry with a paper towel and use the towel to turn off the sink and open the door.
- **Cover your mouth.** Many respiratory illnesses are spread by coughing or sneezing. Teach children to cover their mouths with a tissue, elbow or shoulder - not their hand. (Because of the doorknob thing.)
- **Keep it clean.** Keep your home as sanitary as possible, with special attention to door knobs, toilets, diaper-changing areas, toys, and food-handling areas.

This article contains some additional suggestions to help "Stop the Spread of Cold and Flu Germs":

<https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/cold-guide/stop-germs#1>

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If your child becomes ill at school and the school feels your child is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious to other children, you will be called to come and take him/her home from school. It is essential that the office has a phone number where you can be contacted during the day and an emergency number in the event you cannot be reached. Please be sure that arrangements can be made to transport your child home from school and that childcare is available in case of illness. If your daytime or emergency phone number changes during the year, please notify the office at 305-795-2000 or email [info@stmarycathedralschool.org](mailto:info@stmarycathedralschool.org).

For certain medical conditions, very specific recommendations or requirements address whether a child should stay out of school. These guidelines are meant to serve the best interests of all the children and staff in school. If you have questions or concerns, please consult your pediatrician, local hospital, or urgent care center.

Thank you for your support in making sure our children stay healthy and safe.

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