



# Rainham Mark Grammar School

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## Illness and Attending School

As a parent, sometimes it can be difficult to decide whether your child is well enough to go to school. To help avoid unnecessary school absences, we have produced this guide to help you decide whether your child is well enough to attend school when they have a minor illness.

You have a legal duty to ensure your child is not absent where this can be avoided. We may not authorise your child's absence for a minor illness where we deem the absence unnecessary. Missing lessons is disruptive for children and there is very good evidence that children achieve better at school when they have good school attendance rates.

Your child should only be kept away from school due to illness if they:

1. Have an infectious illness which could spread to other people
2. Need care during school hours that cannot be carried out in school
3. Are so unwell - either mentally or physically - that they are not able to cope with lessons

**Medical appointments** - Please try to arrange doctors', dentists', mental health professionals' and opticians' appointments outside school hours when possible. If this is not possible, your child should attend school for the rest of the day.

**Medicines in school** - Your child does not need to be kept at home just because they are taking medicines. If your child needs to take medicines during the school day, please leave them at the main school office, where your child can access them when required.

## Minor illnesses

### Colds and coughs

Children can attend school with a mild cold and cough. If your child has asthma, remember they may need their reliever inhaler more often and should carry this on them. They should also have a spare inhaler and spacer (if required) in the main school office which they can use when they are at school.

### Raised temperature (fever)

If your child is shivery or feels hot, they may have a raised temperature. This may be due to a variety of reasons. If your child has a raised temperature (over 38°C), they should not be in school. It is important to measure the temperature accurately with a digital thermometer, which you can buy from a supermarket or pharmacy.



## **Rashes**

A rash could be one of the first signs of many childhood illnesses, such as chickenpox or measles. The rash or 'spots' may cover the entire body or may only appear in one area. If your child has an unexplained rash, please seek medical advice. Do not send a child to school with an unexplained rash that may be infectious, until you have consulted your doctor or they are better.

## **Ear infections and ear ache**

Ear infections are very common, particularly in children. You don't always need to see a GP for an ear infection as they often get better on their own. If your child has a raised temperature (over 38°C), they will need to stay off school until this improves. Your child may also need pain relief if they are experiencing an earache.

## **Headache**

If the only complaint is a headache, your child will not need to be kept at home; appropriate pain relief should be administered, this should be kept in the main school office. If a headache is persistent and not responding to pain relief, contact your GP.

## **Tummy ache**

If your child complains of mild tummy ache and has no other symptoms, they should go to school. If the tummy ache is associated with vomiting/diarrhoea then your child must stay off school until the symptoms have stopped.

If your child complains of repeated mild tummy ache, headache or other symptoms and does not want to attend school, this could be due to your child being unhappy at school or finding school work difficult. Speak to your child, the form tutor or their Pastoral Assistant to discuss this and find ways of dealing with it.

## **Vomiting and diarrhoea**

If a child has vomiting or has diarrhoea, keep them off school. You can usually treat your child at home. The most important thing is to have plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Your child is most infectious from when the symptoms start until two days after they've stopped.

Do:

- Encourage them to always wash their hands after going to the toilet and before preparing or eating food
- Wash dirty clothes and bedding separately on a hot wash
- Clean toilet seats, flush handles, taps, surfaces and door handles every day

Don't:

- Prepare food for other people, if possible
- Share towels, flannels, cutlery or utensils

The following table provides further guidance on some common childhood illnesses, and whether children need to stay off school (From Guidance on Health Protection in Schools, Public Health England 2018)

Illness	Recommendations
Chicken pox and shingles	Keep off school for five days from start of rash and until all the spots have crusted over
Cold sores	No need to be off school
Conjunctivitis	No need to be off school
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Keep off school until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting
Flu (influenza)	Children should return to school as soon as they have recovered
Glandular fever	No need to be off school
Hand, foot and mouth disease	It is not usually necessary to keep off school
Head lice (nits)	No need to be off school
Impetigo	Keep off school until lesions (spots) are crusted or healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment, whichever is shorter
Measles	Keep off school for four days from start of rash and until recovered
Molluscum contagiosum	No need to be off school
Mumps	Keep off school for five days from start of swollen glands
Ringworm	It is not usually necessary to keep off school
Rubella (German measles)	Keep off school for four days from start of rash
Scabies	Children can return to school after first treatment
Scarlet fever	Keep off school for 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Slapped cheek / Fifth disease / Parvovirus B19	No need to be off school once rash has developed
Threadworms	No need to be off school
Warts and verrucae	No need to be off school
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Keep off school for two days after starting antibiotic treatment or 21 days from start of cough if no antibiotic treatment has been given

We appreciate that you as parents and carers work with us and hope that this guide helps you and us in ensuring excellent attendance rates and therefore successful outcomes for all our young people.

Yours sincerely,  
The RMGS Attendance Team