



ST. MARY'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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When to keep you son home from school, due to an illness:

It is often hard to decide if you should send your son to school when he is not feeling well. In addition, illness is very seldom convenient! As busy parents, you have to consider work schedules, childcare arrangements, transportation and other family matters in that decision, and of course, you want what is best for your son.

It's also not easy to achieve a balance between reinforcing the importance of being at school and having the best attendance possible, and making a good parent decision that your son will not be able to be "in attention" at school today because of illness. That's especially hard when you have a "high-achiever" who does not want to miss a day and lose that perfect attendance record. But balance is what being a good parent is all about!

We feel very strongly at St. Mary's International School that good attendance is extremely important to your son's success at school! They must be here in order to learn. There are also important health reasons for keeping your son home from school. If your son has an illness that is contagious, he may cause others to get ill as well. Just as you do not want your son to be exposed to illness at school, other parents desire the same courtesy. So here are some helpful guidelines to consider when you hear those words, "I feel sick."

These guidelines were developed from Center of Disease Control (CDC), Health Protection Agency, and Japanese Public Health Department to assist in the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases. Please assist us in preventing their spread at school.

FEVER — check your son's temperature with a thermometer. If a fever over 37.6° C or 100° F is present, DO NOT send him to school, even for just a little while in the morning to see if he starts feeling better. Also, do not give him medication to lower the fever and then send him to school. That only reduces the fever for a short time, and doesn't take care of the illness that is causing the fever. Coming to school sick (and possibly contagious) not only exposes other boys to the illness, but also delays your son's healing time. Once the medicine wears off and the fever returns, your son must be picked up anyway, and valuable healing time has been lost. **Children must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of medicine, before returning to school.**

VOMITING/DIARRHEA — until we know that these are not signs of a contagious illness, such as a stomach virus, your son should be kept home. Consider how uncomfortable these two things are, even to an adult who has better control, and how distressed and embarrassed your son will be at school having to go to the restroom often, or feeling sick while sitting at his desk. **If the vomiting or diarrhea happens more than once that day, or if they are associated with fever, you must keep your child home.** Even if these things happen only one time before school starts, and your son feels better immediately afterwards, it is still wise to watch for a few hours to see if it happens again before sending him on to class. If your child is spending all his time at school feeling sick, then not much learning is taking place!

If your son is nauseated in the morning, please try giving him something to eat and wait at least 1 hour before sending him to school. Nausea may not be anything, but it is best to wait and see if he starts feeling better or worse before sending him to school.

SKIN RASHES — if the rash has any fluid or pus coming from it, the child must remain out of school until the rash has been treated and a note from the doctor states it is ok to return to

school, or until the rash is gone, dried, or scabbed over with no new spots appearing. Anytime a rash is associated with fever, the child may not come to school until that **fever is gone for 24 hours** without medication. Sometimes a rash is a sign of a contagious disease such as chickenpox. Sometimes, rashes are not contagious, but are uncomfortable and itchy from contact with something your son may be allergic to. In that case, although school is certainly a good option, please consider comfort measures such as an antihistamine, following the school's policy for medication administration at school and discussing possible treatment with the school nurse.

RED EYES, ESPECIALLY IF THERE IS ALSO DRAINAGE OR CRUSTING AROUND THE EYE — this can often mean your son has conjunctivitis, also known as pink-eye. Not all “pink-eye” is contagious. Sometimes it is just allergies or other irritations that are causing the red color, but until we know for sure (which means we must have a note from the doctor stating the condition is not contagious, or until the redness and drainage are completely gone), your son must remain out of school. **IF TREATMENT HAS BEEN STARTED, IT IS NECESSARY TO KEEP YOUR SON FROM RETURNING FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS AFTER THE MEDICATION HAS STARTED. IN SOME CASES IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT MEDICATIONS BE GIVEN FOR 48 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.** If your son continues to itch his eyes, it is best to keep him home!

PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE) OR SCABIES — these small insects cause skin conditions that are uncomfortable and itchy, and could become infected with all the scratching. Check with the school nurse to get information on treatment and when your son may return to school if those conditions are present. Remember, household linens will need to be laundered in addition to the treatment for your son.

SORE / STREP THROAT (YORENKIN) — If your son has a mild sore throat, no fever and is otherwise feeling well, he may be fine to attend school. However, please keep your son home and seek a medical provider for a severe sore throat and if you see white spots in the back of your son's throat, with or without a fever. Strep throat (yorenkin) is a contagious illness. Other symptoms may include headache and an upset stomach. Untreated strep throat can lead to serious complications. **If your son is diagnosed with strep throat (yorenkin) he may return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours and feeling better.**

COUGH: — A mild hacking cough often starts after the first few days of a common cold. Mild symptoms, no fever and otherwise feeling well your son may be fine at school. If your son's cough is uncontrollable or deep, he belongs at home even without a fever. **A cough and fever means your son should remain home for at least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without medications.**

If your son has other symptoms such as headaches or a stuffy nose, or sore throat, that do not require them to be out of school but that will make them uncomfortable during class, please discuss the use of over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medications with your doctor. Remember you must follow school guidelines for giving medicine at school. Call the school nurse if you are not sure about those requirements.

We also understand that sometimes boys pretend to exaggerate illness in order to stay home. However, frequent complaints of illness may be a physical sign that your son is feeling emotional stressed or exhausted. If they frequently complain of an illness, please take their symptoms seriously. You may want to seek a medical provider or feel free to share your concerns with the school staff. It is our goal to help your son to have a positive experience at school.

Boys who are truly sick will heal better and faster when they have proper rest at home, with healthy nutrition and plenty of fluid for hydration. Your school nurse is available for assistance during school hours if you have questions. It is our goal to help your son have a positive and healthy experience at St. Mary's International School.