



Convent Hill, Ballina, Co. Mayo
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ST. NICHOLAS STUDENT ILLNESS POLICY

St. Nicholas School has a duty of care to all its students and members of staff. This policy aims to set out procedures to be followed when children become unwell, to ensure that they are well cared for and that, where the cause is of an infectious nature, others are not exposed needlessly.

In matters of pupil health, the School has a Nurse employed on site. The school does not have a 'sick bay' where a student who is unwell can stay during the school day.

Illness or Infection at School

Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians

When student should be kept at home:

Parents are asked **not** to send their child/ children to school if any of the following apply:

- The child has symptoms of an infectious illness that is mentioned in the list of 'Common Ailments requiring Pupils to Stay at Home' at the back of this policy (**Appendix 1**) or in HSE Publication: 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School – 2014', Chapter 9. <http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/schoolhealth/File,14304,en.pdf>
- The child does not feel well enough to participate in the normal program of curriculum activities.
- The child requires more care than the classroom team is able to provide without affecting the health, safety and schoolwork of the other students.
- If antibiotics are prescribed for a contagious illness or infection, the child should not attend school until at least 48 hours after treatment has begun and must be showing signs of improvement.
- If head lice or ringworm is noticed, the child may not come to school until treatment has begun. See the end of **Appendix 1** at the back of this policy.
- If a child has been sent to school and is clearly unwell, as described above, a parent or guardian will be asked to collect him/ her from school as soon as possible.

Student Absence - Informing the bus escort

If a student becomes ill overnight or at the weekend and is unable to attend on the next school day, the parent/ guardian should contact the bus escort so the school bus need not come unnecessarily to the house. The evening before a student returns to school, the parent/ guardian should phone the bus escort to ensure their son/ daughter is collected in the morning.

Student Absence - Informing the school

As well as contacting the bus escort, the parent/ guardian must also contact the school office, stating the reason for the child's absence.

This is very important for the following reasons:

- If a child has an illness which is recognised by HSE as an infectious disease, staff, other parents/guardians or the authorities may need to be notified. It is vital that information about an infectious disease is passed to the school as soon as possible.
- National Educational Welfare Board requires the reason for absence to be recorded
- Student absences may affect how staff members are assigned during the school day.

Returning to school

A student who has an infectious ailment, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy cold, should remain at home until they are no longer infectious. The length of time before return will depend on the ailment and on the treatment. Guidelines in **Appendix 1** at the back of this policy, or in 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School' (Chapter 9), should be followed. For some infectious diseases, the school may require a doctor's 'fitness to return' note before the student is allowed to come back to school.

Collecting student when ill

If the school nurse and/ or the Principal contacts a parent/ guardian to say that their child has been examined and is not well enough to be at school or travel home on school transport, the parent/ guardian must arrange to collect the child as soon as possible. This is primarily for the well-being of the student who is unwell. In the case of infectious diseases, it is also very important for the well-being of the other students and the school staff. Classroom staff will aim to keep the student as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/ guardian to arrive. The parent/ guardian will be handed a 'Return to School' Slip (See **Appendix 7** at the back of this policy) where an infectious illness is present or suspected. This slip is to be completed and sent in with the student on his/ her first day back at school.

Responsibility of School

If a student feels unwell or appears unwell, on arrival at school or during the school day, the procedures at the back of this policy, in **Appendix 2**, will be followed for the well-being of the student who is sick and of all members of the school community.

On an ongoing basis, St Nicholas' aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. These practices will be taught as part of the SPHE curriculum and will be consolidated throughout the school day. They will include:

- Teaching and implementing effective handwashing throughout the school, with staff leading by example

- Teaching and implementing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, e.g. to turn away when coughing or sneezing, etc.
- Facilitating the Schools Immunisation Programme

Provision of gloves, aprons, suitable sanitising cleaning products and cleaning equipment for staff who are in contact with bodily fluids when caring for a student.

Medical Procedures during the School Day

The School Nurse

If a student is likely to require a medical procedure to be carried out during the school day on an ongoing basis, parents and guardians must notify the Principal in writing as soon as possible, i.e. on application, or as soon as the procedure may become necessary. The Principal will consult with School nurse who will make contact directly with a parent/ guardian.

Roles and Responsibility

- This policy has been written by the school nurse in conjunction with the management team.
- The Board of Management will ratify this policy. The school community has responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- The core committee will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation.

Implementation Date 01/10/2024

The operation of the revised policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended, in three months, and following ratification, will be reviewed on an annual basis thereafter.

Ratification & Communication

BOM meeting to discuss elements of policy: Yes

Circulation of policy to parents: Yes

Review & Monitoring:

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

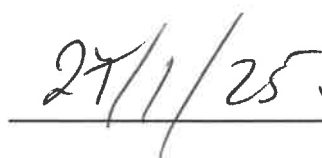
Policy adopted by the Board of Management on 27/01/2025

Signed:



Chairperson

Date:



APPENDIX 1

Common Ailments requiring Children to Stay at Home or to Visit GP

CHICKEN POX: The child should not attend school until all scabs are dry and crusted. This is usually 5-7 days after appearance of rash.

DIARRHOEA: When your child has had diarrhoea due to infection, he/ she should only return to school once 48 hours have passed following the last loose bowel movement. For example, if your child has his/her last loose bowel movement at 11 am on Sunday morning, he/she cannot return to school until Wednesday morning.

VOMITING: As in the case of diarrhoea, the child should remain at home until 48 hours have passed since last episode of vomiting due to infection.

FEVER: The normal body temperature is 36.5 to 37.2 C. If the child develops a temperature, she/he should remain at home until 24 hours after the fever has passed.

HEAVY COLD SYMPTOMS OR FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS: e.g. large amount of yellow-green nasal discharge, sleepiness, ear pain and/or fever. The child should be kept at home until these have subsided and the he/ she is able to participate in the normal school curriculum.

MILD COLD SYMPTOMS: If a child's mild cold symptoms would prevent him/ her from participating in normal school curriculum, e.g. significant weariness at onset, streaming watery discharge from nose, persistent cough, he/ she should be kept at home.

CONJUNCTIVITIS: inflammation of the lining of the eye and eyelid, causing sore or red eyes; can be highly contagious if bacterial or viral. Children with red eye/s and a watery or sticky discharge must be evaluated by a doctor, who will advise about return to school - at least 24 hours after start of treatment, perhaps until fully recovered.

IMPETIGO: The fluid inside the blisters is very infectious. The child should be taken to the doctor who will advise about return to school, usually when blisters have dried and healed or a minimum of 24 hrs after commencing antibiotics.

Common Conditions requiring Immediate Treatment

HEAD LICE: It is important to avoid contact between an affected child and others. If parents/guardians notice head lice, or are advised that they have been noticed in the child's hair at school, treatment must begin before the child returns to school. So long as the treatment begins before bed-time, the child may attend school the next day.

RINGWORM: A child with suspected ringworm should be taken to their GP and, if ringworm is confirmed, treatment should begin as soon as possible. Once parents/guardians attend to this, the child may return to school.

Appendix 2

Internal School Procedures when a Student is Unwell

- If a class teacher is concerned that a student is unwell, she/ he will inform the Principal.
- The Principal or the class teacher will request that School Nursing examine the student.
- Sometimes the nurse will examine the student in the classroom. At other times, an SNA will bring the child to the Nurse Office.
- Having examined the child, the nurse will advise the Principal as to whether or not the child is well enough to stay at school.
- If the child needs to go home because he/ she has an infectious illness, or is too unwell to participate in school activities, the Principal and the nurse will agree how parents will be informed.
- If symptoms appear to be serious or distressing an ambulance and/or doctor should be called.
- If the child is not infectious but may require 'over the counter' medication to alleviate symptoms while at school (e.g. Calpol for headache), the nurse will phone a parent/ guardian to discuss this. She will also document any treatment in the child's communication book, and re-assess the child within an agreed timeframe.
- In the case of a child who is unwell and is awaiting collection, staff will ensure that the child is supervised, reassured and made as comfortable as possible.
- If the child has an infectious condition:
 - further contact with other children will be limited by moving the child to a separate space in the classroom or by removing him/ her from the classroom, if so advised by the nurse
 - all other necessary precautions will be taken to limit the spread of infection, i.e. careful hand-washing and use of suitable sanitising cleaning products, as required
 - the parent/ guardian will be handed a 'Return to School Slip' to be completed and sent to child's class teacher on his/ her return
- If advised by the School Nurse that a particular child has symptoms of an infectious disease which needs to be reported to staff and other parents, or to the HSE, the Principal will ensure this is communicated promptly

Appendix 3

Return to School Slip



Convent Hill, Ballina, Co. Mayo
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Dear Parent/ Guardian,

In order to comply with the school Student Illness Policy on infectious illnesses or conditions, please complete the following and send in with your child on his/ her return to school.

Name of Child.....

Nature of Illness or Condition.....

Date:

PLEASE NOTE: If vomiting or diarrhoea occurred due to infectious condition, your child should not return to school until 48 hours have passed since last episode.

Date and time of last symptom:

If condition required treatment, date/ time of treatment.....

Signed:

(Parent/ Guardian)