



# GUIDANCE FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF INFECTIONS IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER CHILDCARE SETTINGS

Persons attending schools or childcare settings, including children and staff, can acquire infections at home, in the community, or while attending school or childcare. These infections can spread easily in these settings. Infection control practices, including staying home when sick, help to stop these infections from spreading. When someone is ill or has an infection, they should stay home for at least the minimum recommended exclusion period to recover and protect others.

Each school or childcare setting may set their own policies but should never set policies shorter than the minimum recommended exclusion periods from public health.

## MINIMUM RECOMMENDED EXCLUSION PERIOD

For all fevers, regardless of cause, the child should be excluded until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS	
Infection	Exclusion Period
COVID-19*	Exclude if positive until recovered and/or negative test
Flu (Influenza)	Until recovered
Measles*	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps*	5 days after onset of swelling
Strep Throat	24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)*	5 days after starting antibiotic treatment or 21 days from onset of illness if no treatment

DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING ILLNESSES	
Illness	Exclusion Period
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting (including food-borne diseases, food poisoning, etc.)	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting

RASHES AND SKIN INFECTIONS	
Infection or Condition	Exclusion Period
Chickenpox (Varicella)*	5 days from onset of rash and until all blisters are crusted over
Cold Sores	None
German Measles (Rubella)*	5 days from onset of rash
Hand, Foot and Mouth (Coxsackie Virus)	None unless excessive drooling due to mouth sores
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Ringworm-skin/scalp	Until appropriate treatment has begun
Scabies	Until the first treatment is completed
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment

OTHER INFECTIONS AND CONDITIONS	
Infection or Condition	Exclusion Period
Conjunctivitis	Until prescribed treatment has been given for 24-48 hours or condition improves
Head Lice	Until appropriate treatment has begun
Meningitis (Bacterial or Viral)*	Until recovered and cleared by physician
Mononucleosis	None
MRSA	None unless directed by physician or wound is draining and cannot be covered
Hepatitis A*	7 days after onset of jaundice or 7 days after symptom onset if no jaundice
Other vaccine preventable disease (diphtheria, polio, pulmonary TB etc.)*	Exclude immediately and until advised to return by public health

### REPORTING

- Report any condition marked with an asterisk (\*) when even one case is identified
- Report any unusual condition, infection or illness should be reported
- Report other conditions if there are signs of an outbreak

### SIGNS OF AN OUTBREAK IN A SCHOOL OR CHILDCARE SETTING

- Several children are ill with the same illness
- Sudden increase in the number of absentees with report of illness

### ACTION IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK

- Report to public health and follow public health recommendations
- Enhance infection prevention and control measures
  - Hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette, use of personal protective equipment, ventilation, environmental cleaning, etc.
- Communicate with parents and guardians

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

This guidance supports the prevention and control of infections in schools and childcare settings. While it is designed to assist with decision-making in these settings, some situations may require further guidance from public health. There may also be situations where close contacts of a person with an illness or infection may also need to stay home and not attend school or other childcare settings. If there is uncertainty about how to manage an illness or infection in a school or childcare setting, public health should be contacted for advice.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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