

Health Policy for Creative Play

Dear Parents,

We understand keeping kids home from school or daycare due to illness is difficult for kids and their parents. Not only are the children sick, but they are missing their education (and time with their friends), and their parents are missing work and other responsibilities. Our main goal is to keep kids and adults healthy. We want to minimize missed school and daycare, but more importantly minimize the spread of illness in these places so that more kids (and adults) don't get sick.

Our guidelines are set based on information from the Rockland County Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Children and Family Services and as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Children get a lot of different illnesses during their childhood years. Some of these illnesses are not contagious (like ear infections, asthma or allergies), while some are contagious (like COVID-19, flu, strep throat, the common cold and other viruses). It is often hard for schools, daycares and parents to decide what should keep a kid home from school or daycare and what should not. The more difficult decisions come when a child is *not* too ill to participate, but poses a risk of spreading harmful/dangerous infection to others. This is when the decision to stay home is most important during these times! Check in with your child each morning for signs of illness.

If your child is **missing school for ANY reason** (vacation, lack of childcare to and from, not well, etc.) you must call the office and let us know the reason for your child's absence.

If your child suffers from diagnosed seasonal allergies or asthma and have "typical" symptoms that they demonstrate during the allergy season or during a specific time/event that triggers a reaction from an allergen we need to be made aware. Please send in a statement from your health care provider that explains the reaction(s) your child presents. This will help us in understanding a runny nose, a tickle in the throat or a clearing cough. We do not want anyone upset or panicking over what is a normal reaction for your child, a physician's statement will help ease the concern of presented symptoms.

Keep communication open with your teachers and our office staff, we are here to support you. If in doubt, simply ask. We will try and provide a clear answer. I believe in our parents, our staff and our children to do what is right for not just us as individuals, but for our school community!

Please follow the guidance below. A list of Signs and Symptoms is attached.

Be well, be safe and be HAPPY,

Renee Bucci

Renee Bucci
Director

Signs and Symptoms

- **Fever:** If your child has a fever (temperature read 100 degrees or over), you must keep your child home from school until the child is fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. We know with children fever can spike sporadically we need to be cautious in transmitting illness.
- **Colds:** Colds are contagious before, during and after kids have cold symptoms, although colds are not dangerous illnesses to healthy kids we ask that you keep your child home until they are feeling better. If their cold lingers beyond a reasonable amount of time you should contact your healthcare provider for guidance. If the child still presents cold like symptoms after a few days the child may return to school with a note from your healthcare provider saying that it is safe to do so.
- **Nasal congestion or runny nose:** This could be from a common cold (see above) allergies or this may be a symptom of COVID-19, so please address the reason behind your child symptom and consult your child's health care provider on when it is appropriate to send him or her to school.
- **Shortness of breath:** This may be a symptom of something greater, so please address the reason behind your child's respiratory concern. If you believe it is from your child not feeling well, please stay home from school until your child is feeling better. If it is a typical sign/symptom that your child experiences from his or her allergies or asthmatic reaction you may send your child to school providing your child is well enough to engage and we were previously informed.
- **Sore throat:** This may be a symptom of something greater, so please address the reason behind your child's sore throat. If you believe it is from your child not feeling well, please stay home from school until your child is feeling better. If it is a typical sign/symptom that your child experiences from his or her allergies or asthmatic reaction you may send your child to school providing your child is well enough to engage and we were previously informed.
- **Cough:** This may be a symptom of something greater, so please address the reason behind your child's cough. If you believe it is from your child not feeling well, please stay home from school until your child is feeling better. If it is a typical sign/symptom that your child experiences from his or her allergies or asthmatic reaction you may send your child to school providing your child is well enough to engage and we were previously informed.
- **Diarrhea:** Diarrhea is sometimes contagious and sometimes not. You must keep your child home until the diarrhea has stopped for a 24 hour period.
- **Nausea and Vomiting:** Vomiting is sometimes contagious and sometimes not. You must keep your child home until the vomiting/nausea has stopped for a 24 hour period.
- **Muscle Aches:** Please address the reason behind your child's body aches. If you believe it is from your child not feeling well, please stay home from school until your child is feeling better.
- **Headache:** If you believe it is from your child not feeling well, please stay home from school until your child is feeling better. If it is a typical sign/symptom that your child experiences from his or her allergies or asthmatic reaction you may send your child to school providing your child is well enough to engage and we were previously informed.
- **Fatigue:** This may be a symptom of something greater, so please address the reason behind your child's sleepy self; if you believe it is from your child not feeling well, please stay home from school until your child is feeling better.
- **Rash:** It is hard to decide which rashes should cause exclusion and which shouldn't. Fever or discomfort with rash might be cause for exclusion. Rashes that are draining should be covered with a bandage or result in exclusion. Your pediatrician can identify a rash if your child gets one and help decide when to return to school/daycare.
- **Pinkeye:** Some pinkeye is contagious and some is not. Except in very rare cases, pinkeye resolves without treatment. Kids with eye redness AND drainage start antibiotic eye drops, they can return immediately after starting drops. If there is not treatment, please contact your health care provider as to when your child should return to school.
- **Head Lice:** Lice are not caused by poor hygiene and happen to kids everywhere. They can spread from direct head-to-head contact, but will not fly or jump across the room to infect your child. Lice are harmless. We do ask that you keep your child home until you determine the best treatment for your child's case of head lice. We ask for you to consult your health care provider as to when they feel it is best for our child to return to school.
- A last point to make about keeping kids home from school or daycare is about vaccines. Many illnesses like chickenpox, measles and meningitis, that used to be commonly spread in schools and daycares, are now almost never seen because of the success of the vaccines that prevent them. Influenza vaccine prevents a lot of exclusion every year – but kids have to get it yearly. Vaccines are a very important part of keeping our kids healthy and in school and daycare.

Whenever in doubt, consult with your healthcare provider and look for guidance from them.