

PUPIL ILLNESS AND INFECTION POLICY

Enable Ireland Sandymount School has a duty of care to all its pupils and members of staff. This policy aims to set out procedures to be followed when pupils 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. Procedures regarding the administration of medicine during the school day are also outlined.

In matters of pupil health, staff at Sandymount School work closely with the Enable Ireland Nursing Team. The Nursing Station is based in close proximity to the school on the Sandymount campus.

Illness or Infection at School

Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians

When pupils should be kept at home

Parents are asked not to send their pupils to school if any of the following apply:

- The pupil 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.
<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/National-Emergencies-Public-Health-Issues/Management-of-Infectious-Disease-in-Schools.pdf>
- The pupil is unable to participate in the normal programme of curriculum activities as not as baseline presentation.
- The pupil requires more care than the classroom team is able to provide without affecting the health, safety and schoolwork of the other pupils.
- If antibiotics are prescribed for a bacterial or infectious/contagious illness, the pupil should not attend school until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- If head lice is noticed, the school advises that treatment begins before sending the child back to school. See the end of Appendix 1 at the back of this policy.
- If a pupil has been sent to school and is clearly unwell, as described above, after consultation with the nursing team and/or the principal a parent or guardian may be asked to collect him/ her from school as soon as possible.

Covid-19

Covid-19 is spread in sneeze or cough droplets, and can be easily spread to other people. Therefore, we would ask that if your pupil is displaying any of the symptoms below that you do not send them to school

- Cough
- Fever (high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above including having chills)
- Fatigue (tiredness)

Less common symptoms of Covid-19 include:

- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- Nasal congestion (runny or blocked nose)
- Conjunctivitis (also known as red eye or pink eye)
- Sore throat



- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain (aches and pains)
- Different types of skin rash
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Chills or dizziness

Covid-19 symptoms can be like symptoms of cold, flu or hay fever.

If on arrival to school your pupil presents with symptoms of Covid-19 you will be contacted to collect them and to contact your GP for advice.

In the event that your pupil tests positive they should not return to school until they have completed the recommended isolation period in line with Public Health Guidelines.

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting

A pupil with diarrhoea (3 or more loose watery bowel motions) and/or new onset vomiting they should not be sent to school.

If a pupil develops diarrhoea and/or vomiting during the school day, the parents/guardians will be informed promptly as the pupil will need to be taken home. Generally, the pupil can return to school 48 hours after the last episode and/or vomiting if they are well enough to do so.

This will be monitored by nurses and reviewed on a case by case basis if the child has known gastrointestinal issues.

Respiratory Infections

It is recommended that parents/guardians consult their GP for advice on the period the pupil will be kept at home with respiratory infection as the absence will depend on the illness. It is always necessary to keep the pupil at home for a minimum of 24 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment. If your pupil has respiratory symptoms, Covid-19 should be considered.

Rashes, skin infection and other infectious disease

Any pupil with an infectious disease or a spreading rash should not be sent to school until they have had clearance from their GP to do so. Some infectious diseases spread rapidly and can cause others to become ill very quickly if exposed to them.

Anaesthetic/surgical/ dental procedure

If your pupil has had an anaesthetic/surgical procedure, please observe him/her at home for at least 24 hours following discharge. He/she may still be sleepy from the anaesthetic or may be in pain from the procedure. Seek guidance from the doctor or dentist on when your child should return to school.

Illness occurring in school

If an Enable Ireland nurse and/ or the Principal contacts a parent/ guardian to say that their pupil 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 pupil as soon as possible. This is primarily for the well-being of the pupil who is unwell. In the case of infectious diseases, it is also very important for the well-being of the other pupils and the school staff. Classroom staff and/or nursing team will aim to keep the pupil as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/ guardian to arrive.



Returning to school

A pupil who has an infection, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy cold or above normal temperature 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 pupil is allowed to come back to school.

It is always necessary to keep the pupil at home for a minimum of 24 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment for a bacterial infection as per HSE Guidelines.

Pupil Absence - Informing the bus escort

If a pupil 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 pupil returns to school, the parent/ guardian should phone the bus escort to ensure their son/ daughter is collected in the morning.

Pupil Absence - Informing the school

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

This is very important for the following reasons:

- If a pupil 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
- Pupil absences may affect how staff members are assigned during the school day.

Responsibility of School

If a pupil 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 pupil who is sick and of all members of the school community.

On an ongoing basis, Enable Ireland Sandymount School aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. Staff should consult the school's "Hand Washing Policy." 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 hand washing throughout the school, with staff leading by example.
- Visuals of proper handwashing techniques near the sink provided.
- 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 pupil.



- Provision of appropriate bin in the classroom and elsewhere in the school to properly dispose of the dirty tissues.

Administration of Medication in School

In Enable Ireland Sandymount School, medication is administered by the Enable Ireland Nursing Team rather than by school staff. At present, the one exception to this is the prescribed emergency regime for epilepsy management. Bus escorts and SNAs, who are fully trained, may administer emergency rescue medication to and from school, this includes epipen's . Every two years, all members of staff are trained to administer epilepsy medication in the case of an emergency, when an Enable Ireland Nurse is unavailable within the necessary time frame. For further information, please see Enable Ireland/Sandymount School epilepsy management guidelines. As the medical needs of our pupils change, the Board of Management and school staff may need to respond to requests for administration of other types of similar medication e.g. epi-pen.

During the school day, the administration of medication is the responsibility of the nursing team. They will liaise with the class teacher to minimise disruption to the pupil's school day.

Administration of Infrequent Medicines

Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians

If a pupil has been prescribed a short-term antibiotic (must be accompanied by a scanned or faxed copy of prescription) or requires 'over the counter' medication when in recovery, the parent/guardian should contact the nursing team.

Administration of Regular Medication

If a pupil requires medication during the school day on a regular or an ongoing basis, parents and guardians will contact the nursing team.

An Enable Ireland nurse will agree on an individual medication plan with the class teacher to ensure medication is given as prescribed with minimal disruption to the pupil's school day.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Sé Goulding, Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle, Principal

Date: 25 September 2025



APPENDIX 1

Common Ailments requiring Pupil to stay at Home or to Visit GP

If a pupil is unable to participate in the school curriculum due to illness their needs may be assessed by the nursing team and principal and parents will be notified accordingly.

CHICKEN POX: The pupil 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 pupil should remain at home until 48 hours have passed since last episode of vomiting due to infection. (Please see the example for diarrhoea above)

FEVER: The normal body temperature is 35.5 to 37.5 C. If the pupil develops a temperature over 38c, 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, ear pain and/or fever. The pupil should be kept at home until these have subsided and the he/ she is able to participate in the normal school curriculum activities.

MILD COLD SYMPTOMS: If a pupil'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. Pupils with red eye/s and a watery or sticky discharge should be evaluated by a doctor. The GP will advise when the pupil can return to school, but usually they do not need to stay away from school unless they feel very unwell.

Common Conditions requiring Immediate Treatment

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

RINGWORM: A pupil 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 pupil may return to school.

If you have any queries, check the HSE publication 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School'.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/schoolhealth/File,14304,en.pdf>



APPENDIX 2

Internal School Procedures when Pupil is Unwell

If a class teacher is concerned that a pupil is unwell, she/ he will inform the Principal or the Deputy Principal in absence of the principal.

The Principal/Deputy Principal or the class teacher will contact the Enable Ireland Nursing Station to request that a nurse would examine the pupil.

Sometimes the nurse will examine the pupil in the classroom. At other times, an SNA will bring the pupil to the Enable Ireland Nursing Station.

Having examined the pupil, the nurse will advise the Principal or class teacher as to whether or not the pupil is well enough to stay at school.

If the pupil needs to go home because he/ she has an infectious illness, or is too unwell to participate in school activities, the Principal/Deputy Principal and the nurse will agree how parents will be informed. Residential pupils may be returned to the care of the residential staff.

If the pupil is not infectious but may require 'over the counter' medication to alleviate symptoms while at school (e.g. Calpol for pain), the nurse will liaise with the parents and re-assess the pupil if appropriate.

In the case of a pupil who is unwell and is awaiting collection, classroom team or nursing team will ensure that the pupil is supervised, reassured and made as comfortable as possible.

If the pupil has an infectious condition:

- further contact with other pupil will be limited by moving the pupil 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 pupil's class teacher on his/ her return

If advised by the Enable Ireland Nursing Team that a particular pupil 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.

The nursing department and the school team work closely for the best interests of the pupil. The decision as to who will inform the parents will be taken by the team.



APPENDIX 3

Included in parent handbook and sent to parents at the start of each school year.

Illness	Return to School/Childcare Rule
Chicken Pox	When scabs are dry
Conjunctivitis	No need to stay out*
Diarrhoea or Vomiting	48 hours after the last episode
Flu	5 days after start of illness
Glandular Fever	No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth	No need to stay out*
Head Lice	No need to stay out*
Impetigo	When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics
Measles	4 days after rash appears
Mumps	5 days after swelling appears
Scabies	After first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after starting antibiotics
Slapped Cheek	No need to stay out*
Threadworms	No need to stay out*
Whooping Cough	5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness

This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document.

*No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.