



Too unwell for school? Or just feeling a bit off?

Helping your child decide – and how we'll look after them at school

Deciding on a school morning isn't easy. Headaches, tummy aches and period pain are common, and it's natural to want your child at home when they don't feel great. But many mild symptoms can be managed at school – and **if you send them in, we'll look after them**. This guide will help you and your child work out whether it's a "bit off" day or a genuinely unwell day.

Usually fine to come in

A bit off, but otherwise well

- A mild cold or slight cough, such as a runny nose, sore throat or headache – with no high temperature
- A headache or tummy ache when they're otherwise well
- A headache or tummy ache that comes with worry or nerves
- Period cramps or aches that are manageable

Not sure? Send them in – and tell us

Something's off, but it's hard to say what

- Something new and hard to pin down
- A restless night, or low on energy
- Nerves about a lesson, test or friendship
- Pain that keeps coming back on certain days or lessons

Send a quick message or a note and we'll keep a close eye on how they are. If they get worse, we'll call you.

Keep at home – and phone us

Too unwell for a normal school day

- **High temperature** – until it has gone
- **Vomiting or diarrhoea** – until 48 hours after the last episode
- **Chickenpox** – until all spots have crusted over (about 5 days)
- **Impetigo** – until sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after starting antibiotics
- **Scarlet fever** – 24 hours after starting antibiotics
- **Measles** – at least 4 days from when the rash appears
- **Ear infection** with a high temperature or severe earache – until better

Please phone school on the first morning and let us know the reason.

Why we're asking

- **Missed lessons add up.** One day here and there is hard to catch up on, and coming back after time away can feel harder.
- **Staying home can make worry grow.** Tummy aches and headaches are common signs of worry. The NHS advises that avoiding school can make worry about school worse – so talking it through and involving us often helps more.
- **Coming in doesn't mean "toughing it out".** We'll check in with your child, give them time to settle, and call you if it isn't easing.

Helping your child decide – and how we'll help

Questions to ask your child before you decide

- “Where does it hurt or feel wrong – and how bad is it? Could you manage the first lesson?”
- “Have you had a drink and something to eat?”
- “Is anything worrying you about today – a lesson, a test, a friendship, or something else?”
- “If it gets worse, who will you tell and where will you go?”

Talking through worries – such as bullying, friendship problems, schoolwork or noise – and telling us about them helps us find ways to support your child.

If your child feels unwell at school

- They can tell any member of staff, who will check how they're feeling and give them time to rest and settle
- If it isn't easing, or we're concerned, **we'll call you**
- If your child asks you to collect them, please **call us first** so we can check in with them and decide together

Tell us – so we can support properly

If headaches, period pain or tummy aches keep coming up, or there's a health condition we should know about, please tell us. We can agree a plan together, so your child knows where to go and what help is available.

Contact your child's tutor and we will refer you to the right team.

info@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk

Worried about your child's health?

Trust your instincts. Speak to your **GP** or **pharmacist**, call **NHS 111** for advice, or **999** in an emergency. If your child is still struggling with worry and it's affecting everyday life, your GP or the **school nurse** can help – and so can we.

Find out more

- **NHS: Is my child too ill for school?** – nhs.uk/live-well
- **GOV.UK: managing specific infectious diseases in schools** – gov.uk
- **NHS: Anxiety in children** – nhs.uk/mental-health



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