*January 2024*

*Dear Parents and Carers,*

*With winter illnesses very much in circulation at the moment, we are still keen to have children in school as much as possible, provided they are well enough and not contagious. This can sometimes be hard to decide. Please find below some government and local guidance we have been asked to share to support you. If you are EVER in any doubt, please do not hesitate to call school and talk it through (01525 755664). Thank you for all your support.*

**Is my child too ill for school? When is it okay to miss school?**

**It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school, nursery or playgroup when they're unwell.**

There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about [managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-9-managing-specific-infectious-diseases). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to contact the school or nursery on the first day (pupilabsence@russell-lower.co.uk – please add child’s name and class and reason for absence. Unfortunately, ‘unwell’ etc. is not acceptable, it must be specific). Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason.

If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice (following home treatment – see below), let their teacher know. Your child can still come to school, but the teacher will make some adjustments to normal practice.

Follow this advice for:

**Coughs and colds**

It's fine to send your child to school with a [cough](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough/) or [common cold](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/). But if they have a fever (38 degrees or more), keep them off school until the fever goes.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

**High temperature**

If your child has a [high temperature](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fever-in-children/), (38 degrees or more) keep them off school until it goes away.

**Chickenpox**

If your child has [chickenpox](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/), keep them off school until the spots have crusted over.

This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

**Cold sores**

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cold-sores/).

Encourage them not to touch the blister while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

**Conjunctivitis**

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/conjunctivitis/).

Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

**COVID-19**

If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school.

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have more [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-symptoms-and-what-to-do/) and they either:

* have a high temperature (38 degrees or over)
* do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

**What to do if your child has tested positive**

Your child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, or from the day symptoms began.

**Ear infection**

If your child has an [ear infection](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ear-infections/) and a high temperature (38 degrees or over) or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

**Hand, foot and mouth disease**

If your child has [hand, foot and mouth disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hand-foot-mouth-disease/) but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

**Head lice and nits**

There's no need to keep your child off school after they have been treated for headlice. Please just let us know so we can send an anonymised note to ask other parents to check their children’s hair too.

You can treat [head lice and nits](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits/) without seeing a GP.

**Impetigo**

If your child has [impetigo](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/impetigo/), they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics.

Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

**Ringworm**

If your child has [ringworm](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ringworm/), see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP.

It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

**Scarlet fever**

If your child has [scarlet fever](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/), they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.

Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

**Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)**

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [slapped cheek syndrome](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/slapped-cheek-syndrome/) because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious.

But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

**Sore throat**

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat/). But if they also have a high temperature (38 degrees or more), they should stay at home until it goes away.

A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of [tonsillitis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tonsillitis/). Tonsillitis is not infectious so they can come to school as soon as they feel well enough and their temperature is below 38 degrees.

**Threadworms**

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [threadworms](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/threadworms/).

Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

**Vomiting and diarrhoea**

Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/) as a result of a bug should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for 48 hours since the last ‘bout’. If you believe your child has lose stools as a result of something they ate, or has been sick as the result of gagging or a coughing fit, for example, please call the school to discuss this as they may be able to ‘waive’ the 48-hour rule once they have been satisfied this is the case.

**Appointments**

All appointments should be arranged outside of school hours, if at all possible. All schools will ask parents for appointments cards/copies of text messages or emails for any appointments children attend during school hours.

**When can your child can miss school?**

You can only allow your child to miss school if either:

* they’re too ill to go in
* you’ve got advance permission from the school

**Holidays in term time**

Holidays in term time are not permitted.

You have to get permission from the head teacher/deputy head teacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time, due to some exceptional circumstances.

You can only do this if:

* you make an application in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
* there are exceptional circumstances

It’s up to the head teacher/deputy head teacher how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

You can be [fined](https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance) for taking your child on holiday during term time without the school’s permission.

Thank you for all your support. Good attendance is the most important aspect of your child’s education. The government expects no child to have attendance below 95%.

Schools have a duty to work with parents in any circumstances where attendance is below this.

*Please do not hesitate to contact us at Russell if we can do anything at all to support your child’s regular attendance at school – we really appreciate your support and regularly beat the government’s target here – which benefits every child. Thank you.*

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

**Headteacher**