



St Michael's House Special National School

Raheny

ILLNESS AND INFECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St. Michael's House Special National School (SMH SNS), Raheny has a duty of care to all its pupils and members of staff. This policy aims to set out procedures to be followed when children 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.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

It is important that the school is aware of any medical condition that may affect a child during the school day. This information should be supplied to the school in the first instance, when the pupil is admitted to the school. If this situation changes at any time during the child's life in the school, the school should be informed immediately.

ILLNESS AND INFECTION IN SCHOOLS

Infections in children are common, some acute (just there for a short time) and some are chronic (there for a longer time or the life of the child). While we have no wish to exclude a child from school unnecessarily, we do have to consider if the child is well enough to attend school and secondly, if the infection is contagious (can be passed from person to person). Therefore in order to ensure the health and safety of all pupils and staff, we would ask parents/ guardians to follow the guidelines below. It is important that the school is made aware of any infection your child may have, this allows for monitoring of infectious diseases, protection of persons who are particularly vulnerable and informing the local HSE office. Parents / Guardians will be required to complete a "Return to School Slip" following an Illness or Infection.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

When children should be kept at home

Parents are asked not to send their child/ren to school if any of the following apply:

- The child 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-EmergenciesPublic-Health-Issues/Management-of-Infectious-Disease-in-Schools.pdf>
- The child does not feel well enough to participate in the normal programme of curriculum activities.

- The child 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 contagious illness or infection, the child should not attend school until 24 hours after treatment has begun and must be showing signs of improvement.
- If headlice or ringworm is noticed, the child may not come to school until treatment has begun. See the end of Appendix 1 at the back of this policy.

If a child has been sent to school and is clearly unwell, as described above, a parent or guardian will be asked to collect him/ her from school as soon as possible.

Pupil Absence - Informing the bus driver/ 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 driver/ 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 driver/ 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, stating the reason for the child's absence. This is very important for the following reasons:

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

Returning to school

A pupil who has an infectious ailment, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy cold, 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 child is allowed to come back to school.

Collecting child when ill

If the Principal/ Deputy Principal contacts a parent/ guardian to say that their child has been observed to be not well enough to be at school, or travel home on school transport the parent/ guardian must arrange to collect the child as soon as possible. This is primarily for the well-being of the child 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 will aim to keep the child as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/ guardian to arrive. The parent/ guardian will be handed a 'Return to School' Slip (See Appendix 3 at the back of this policy) where an infectious illness is present or suspected. This slip is to be completed and sent in with the child on his/ her first day back at school.

RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL

If a child 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 wellbeing of the child who is sick and of all members of the school community. On an ongoing basis, SMH SNS aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. 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
- 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 child.

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 child is displaying any of the symptoms listed below that you do not send them to school:

- Cough – this can be any kind of cough not just a dry cough
- Fever usually $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Gastro intestinal upsets
- Loss or change to sense of smell or taste

If on arrival to school your child presents with any of these symptoms you will be contacted to collect them and to contact your GP for advice as your child may need to be tested for COVID 19. In the event that your child tests positive they should not return to school until they have completed 14 days isolation and are fever free for the final 5 days.

This will be kept under review and in keeping with Government/Public Health Guidance.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION IN SCHOOL

In SMH SNS, we adhere to the School Administration of Medication Policy.

RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy has been approved by the Patron Body and was ratified by the Board of Management on 26th August 2020. The policy will be made available to all parents/guardians and educational professionals on our website and on request from the school. The policy will be reviewed as required to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

APPENDIX 1

Common Ailments requiring Children to Stay at Home or to Visit GP

CHICKEN POX: The child 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 child should remain at home until 48 hours have passed since last episode of vomiting due to infection.

FEVER: The normal body temperature is 36.5 to 37.2 C. If the child develops a temperature, 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, sleepiness, ear pain and/or fever. The child should be kept at home until these have subsided and the he/ she is able to participate in the normal school curriculum.

MILD COLD SYMPTOMS: If a child'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. Children with red eye/s and a watery or sticky discharge are required to remain at home until evaluated by a doctor and treatment commenced. The GP will advise when the pupil can return to school.

IMPETIGO: The fluid inside the blisters is very infectious. The child should be taken to the doctor who will advise about return to school, usually when blisters have dried and healed or a minimum of 24 hrs after commencing antibiotics.

Common Conditions requiring Immediate Treatment

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

RINGWORM: A child 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 child may return to school.

APPENDIX 2 INTERNAL SCHOOL PROCEDURES WHEN A CHILD IS UNWELL

If a class teacher is concerned that a child is unwell, she/ he will inform the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Having observed the child, the Principal/DP and the class teacher will decide as to whether the child is well enough to stay at school. A staff member will take the child's temperature, where required, and this will be verified by the Principal or Deputy Principal. If the child's temperature reaches 38 degrees parents will be called for immediately.

If the child needs to go home because he/ she has an infectious illness, or is too unwell to participate in school activities, the parents will be informed.

In the case of a child who is unwell and is awaiting collection, staff will ensure that the child is supervised, reassured and made as comfortable as possible.

If the child has an infectious condition:

further contact with other children will be limited by moving the child to a separate space in the classroom or by removing him/ her from the classroom

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 child's class teacher on his/ her return



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RETURN TO SCHOOL SLIP (FOLLOWING ILLNESS)

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

In order to comply with the school Pupil Illness Policy on infectious illnesses or conditions, please complete the following and send in with your child on his/ her return to school.

Name of Child:

Nature of Illness or Condition:

Date:

PLEASE NOTE: If vomiting or diarrhoea occurred due to infectious condition, your child should not return to school until 48 hours have passed since last episode.

Date and time of last symptom:

If condition required treatment, date/ time of treatment:

Signed:

(Parent/ Guardian)

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact the school for advice (01 8325009) or check the HSE publication 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School'.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/NationalEmergencies-Public-Health-Issues/Management-of-Infectious-Disease-in-Schools.pdf>

