

It can be hard to determine when to keep your student home when he or she is experiencing a cough, aches/pains or runny nose. Especially during the winter and spring months, the prevention of communicable disease is important to maintain the health of students and staff and decrease school absenteeism. Examples of communicable disease include, but are not limited to, influenza, gastrointestinal illness (e.g. norovirus, enterovirus), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), strep throat, and COVID-19.

Steps to promote and maintain a prevention-oriented approach include the following:

- Keep students home when sick and/or experiencing symptoms of infectious illness such as: fever greater than 100.0 F, uncontrolled cough, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or signs of an upper respiratory infection.
- Students should only return once all symptoms have improved/resolved, including at least 24 hours have passed since any vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fever without the use of fever-reducing medications (including acetaminophen, for example Tylenol and/or ibuprofen, including Advil, Motrin).

Students who show signs of illness while at school will be assessed by the school nurse/health aide and may be sent home based on presenting symptoms. Medical diagnosis of communicable illness by your healthcare provider and/or known exposure to communicable disease are also reasons for exclusion from school.

The following preventative measures may help reduce your student's frequency of becoming ill.

- Receiving an annual flu vaccine is recommended, especially for those at risk for severe illness or complications of influenza.
- Keeping up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccination and boosters, which is currently the leading public health strategy to lower an individual's risk of severe COVID-19 infection and hospitalization.
- Teaching and promoting hand hygiene at home and school, including hand washing with soap and water and using hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
- Encouraging respiratory etiquette at home and school, including covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or bent arm.
- Special protocols and exclusion of susceptible students and staff may be necessary when dealing with certain communicable diseases and outbreaks as directed by the LaSalle County Health Department and Illinois Department of Public Health.