



Student Sickness Policy

Created: September 2025

Review: September 2026

Copies of all of our policies can be found
in the school office, and online at
rutherfordschool.org.uk

Purpose

- To ensure that, pupils who are ill are cared for at home.
- To protect pupils and staff from preventable cross infection., including, but not limited to Covid 19
- To enable staff and parents/carers to be well informed about the matters to consider when deciding whether a pupil should be in school.

Introduction

Rutherford School recognises that the health and well-being of our pupils is of paramount importance to enable them to access the curriculum. For the comfort and well-being of all pupils, the following policy gives guidelines to school staff and parents/carers to help them decide if a pupil is well enough to attend school. However, in case of doubt parents should discuss with a member of the school nursing team or their child's GP before sending their child in to school.

It is also important to be mindful that many of our pupils have chronic health conditions such as reflux, or excessive secretions which may frequently present in a similar way to an infectious illness.

The (Covid 19) outbreak has highlighted the importance of all members of the school community being aware of and working within the school sick pupil policy. It must be noted that the school does not have a designated sick bay, so any pupil who is unwell will have to remain in the classroom with other pupils while awaiting collection by a parent. This increases the risk of infectious illness transferring to staff and pupils; therefore, it is important that parents are mindful of this when being asked to collect their child.

General Guidelines

The school is very aware of the needs of working parents however, if a pupil is clearly infectious, or is deemed medically unfit by a member of the nursing team or the Clinical Lead and is therefore too unwell to access the curriculum then it is essential that the pupil is not in school.

The following list gives general guidelines for common illnesses and conditions but is not exhaustive.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Any child/ young person who is diagnosed by a healthcare professional with a contagious disease will be excluded from school until they are no longer infectious. The school nurses will liaise with the parents/carers, and the doctor

treating the pupil, if necessary, to ascertain the length of time the pupil should not be in school. If necessary, Public Health England will be contacted for advice.

VOMITING AND/OR DIARRHOEA

Any pupil who has vomiting or diarrhoea must remain at home for **48 hours** after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. The pupil must be tolerating his or her usual diet or enteral feed before returning to school. The school nurses will consider other medical conditions and medications that a pupil has which may cause vomiting or diarrhoea before deciding if a pupil needs to remain at home and will contact the parent or carer to find out whether there has been a change in diet or medication which may be causing the vomiting or diarrhoea. However, where it is not clear what is causing the problem, the school nurse will request that the pupil remains at home for 48 hours to limit the risk of any infecting spreading. When we have a student who may have a condition that causes frequent bowel movements, parents should be aware that this will have an impact on them being able to access the curriculum, perhaps due to spending increased amount of time in the bathroom or they due to distress. In these circumstances parents will be asked to collect the pupil from school.

COUGHS AND COLDS

It is accepted that minor coughs and colds are common, particularly during the winter months. A pupil who has a runny nose, or a mild infrequent cough can attend school, but this will be at the discretion of the school nursing team. If the pupil is distressed and unable to access the curriculum, or if their illness is having an impact on other pupils' learning, or if classroom staff are having to spend a large amount of time assisting the pupil, then they will need to stay at home until their symptoms improve. If the cold gets worse during the day, they will need to go home.

RAISED TEMPERATURE

Any pupil who has a raised temperature above 38C, will need to remain at home until the temperature is back with normal range (usually 36C – 37C). If a pupils temperature becomes raised at school the parent / carer will be contacted and asked to collect the pupil. Paracetamol may be given if prescribed while waiting for the parent to arrive, but this will not be given for the pupil to remain at school. Baseline observations are recorded regularly for each pupil when they are well. If a pupil's temperature goes up following an epileptic seizure this will be recorded in the care plan.

ANTIBIOTICS

If a pupil is prescribed a course of antibiotics, they must not attend school for 48hrs from commencement due to the vulnerability of other pupils at Rutherford and the risk of cross infection. If there is no risk of infection to other pupils, and the pupil seems well in themselves, they can attend school after the initial 48hr period has expired. The school nursing team will administer the antibiotics as prescribed. Parents must ensure that they comply with the school medication policy.

If the antibiotics are for an infection which could be passed on to other pupils or

staff the parents/carers must liaise with the nursing team /GP to confirm when it is safe for the pupil to return to school.

SKIN RASHES

Marks on the skin are very common with our pupils, due to the orthotic devices they wear, and due to some medications, they take. If a pupil has a skin rash, the parents/carers, school nurses and if necessary, the pupil's GP will need to decide whether the rash is caused by an infection and whether the pupil should be in school.

POST-SURGERY

If a pupil has had surgery, the parents/carers must take advice from the surgeon as to when it is advisable for the pupil to return to school. In the case of orthopaedic surgery, due to the nature of our pupils, it may be decided that an early return is advisable for the pupil to receive the necessary physiotherapy. If regular analgesia is required, this can be administered by the school nursing team under the direction of the GP or consultant. Nurses will work closely with classroom staff when deciding if a pupil needs analgesia.

Parents would be required to consult with the physiotherapy team or school nurses to ensure that the pupil's extra needs can be met in school.

COVID 19 The school nursing team will use the latest government and NHS information available when considering whether a pupil may have symptoms consistent with Covid 19. Current government guidance advises that if you have covid 19 symptoms you should stay at home.

Arrangements for Pupils who become unwell during the school day.

If classroom staff feel that a pupil is unwell, they will contact the school nurses who will check the pupil's temperature, and other vital signs as appropriate, such as oxygen levels, and, after comparing these with the pupil's baseline observations, will decide whether the pupil should remain in school. This decision will be a joint decision between the class teacher and the nurse, considering the above guidelines.

If a pupil needs analgesia the nurse must first ensure that none has been given in the previous 4 hours, to avoid over-dosing. We ask that if analgesia has been given before coming to school we are made aware via the home school communication book or email nurses@rutherfordschool.org.uk

- if we are not made aware and the pupil requires analgesia, before 12.30 (or if the child has been in school less than 4 hours) the nurse will contact the parent/carers to find out this information.
- If no contact can be made, the pupil will not be given analgesia until after 12.30.
- After 12.30 (or 4 hours after the pupil has arrived in school) analgesia will be given. The nurse will still attempt to contact the parents, but if no contact can be made the analgesia will be given.

- When analgesia is given in school, the time and dose is written in the Home/School book by the nurse who administered, and the parent may also be informed by telephone if this is felt necessary.

If a pupil needs to be collected during the day, it is the responsibility of the parents/ carers to collect their child.

While waiting to be collected, the unwell pupil will remain in the classroom in the most comfortable position for them. If the pupil appears to be infectious, they will be looked after as far away from other pupils as possible.

If a pupil's condition deteriorates severely or is very unwell while at school, an ambulance will be called, and the parents/carers notified accordingly, as per the Ambulance Policy.

If the pupil has a care plan for the condition they are exhibiting, e.g., epilepsy or airway, the nursing care plan will be used in conjunction with the clinical judgement of the school nurses or Clinical Lead when deciding how the pupil should be treated.

Working Together

To maintain good relationships between parents/carers and school staff, here are some general points which help to avoid un-necessary telephone calls and requests for pupils to be collected.

Parents / Carers

Communicate with class staff via the Home/School book any changes to a child's routine, such as medical changes, new medication, use of laxatives, immunisations, late nights/poor sleeping; this information may help the nurses to decide whether an unhappy pupil is an unwell pupil.

Ensure the school has up –to- date contact numbers. If parents/carers are going to be unobtainable on a day, they must ensure the school has details of another responsible adult who could collect the pupil if necessary. If the school cannot contact parents, the school will try all the numbers on the pupil contact sheet.

If analgesia has been given, inform the school in writing via the Home/School book or email stating name of medication, time given and the reason for giving.

Ensure the school nurses have a supply of all medication that their child/ young person needs, including emergency medication.

SCHOOL STAFF

Nursing Team

Ensure that all medication held for a pupil is in date, and that all requests for more medication are sent to parents prior to medication becoming out of date or no supply.

Nursing team/Class Staff/Therapists

Communicate with parents if a pupil has not been responding in their usual manner so that the parents/carers can observe any changes during the evening.

Liaise with other school staff, so that any calls to parents/carers are kept to a minimum. Ensure that staff do not come into work if they have an infectious illness.

***Michelle Baker
Clinical and Care
Lead***

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL/THERAPEUTIC CONCERN ABOUT A PUPIL



Discuss with
other school
professionals and
SLT, DSL or Duty social worker
Continue trying to call parents.