

# Illness and Infection Policy

## Garbally College Special Class

<b><i>Policy Identification</i></b>	
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Illness and Infection Policy
<b>Strategic Owner:</b>	Garbally College Special Class
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## Introduction

The special class has a duty of care to all its students and members of staff. This policy aims to set out procedures to be followed when students become unwell, to ensure that they are cared for and that, where the cause is of an infectious nature, others are not exposed.

## Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians

### Students should be kept at home in the following situations:

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

- The student has symptoms of an infectious illness that is mentioned in the list of 'Common Ailments requiring Pupils to Stay at Home' or in HSE Publication: 'Management of Infectious Diseases in School – 2014', Chapter 9.

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

- The student does not feel well enough to participate in curriculum activities.
- The student requires more care than the special class is able to provide without affecting the health, safety and schoolwork of the other students.
- If antibiotics are prescribed for a contagious illness or infection, the student should not attend school until 24 hours after treatment has begun and must be showing signs of improvement.
- If infectious skin disease is noticed, the student may not come to school until treatment has begun.

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

### Student Absence - Informing the bus escort

If a student becomes ill overnight or at the weekend and is unable to attend on the next school day, the parent/ guardian should contact the bus escort, so the school bus need not come unnecessarily to the house. The evening before a student is to return to school, the parent/ guardian should phone the bus escort to ensure their son is collected in the morning. If a student is collected from school by parents/guardians, please advise the escort as well.

### Student Absence - Informing the school

The parent/ guardian should contact either the school office or the Special Class coordinator stating the reason for the child's absence. This is very important for the following reasons:

- If a student 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

Parents/Guardians may also record the reason for absence on VSWARE.

### **Returning to school**

A student who has an infectious ailment, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, covid, flu, 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 student is allowed to come back to school for example:

- Chickenpox/Shingles
- Conjunctivitis
- Gastroenteritis/Food Poisoning
- Glandular Fever
- Head lice
- Measles
- Rubella
- Ringworm

### **Collecting a student when ill.**

If the Principal/Deputy Principal/ teacher contacts a parent/ guardian to say that their student has been observed to be unwell and is unfit to remain at school, or travel home on school transport, the parent/ guardian must arrange to collect the student as soon as possible.

This is primarily for the well-being of the student who is unwell. In the case of infectious diseases, it is also very important for the well-being of the other students and the school staff. Staff will aim to keep the student as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/ guardian to arrive.

It is imperative that parents/guardians advise school of a change of contact details and also provide emergency contacts.

### **Responsibility of School**

If a student 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 student who is sick and of all members of the school community.

Garbally College aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. These practices will be taught as part of the curriculum and will be consolidated throughout the school day.

They will include:

- Teaching and implementing effective hand washing, with staff leading by example
- Teaching and implementing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, e.g. to turn away when coughing or sneezing, cough into elbow etc.
- 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.

### **Administration of Medication in School**

In Garbally College we adhere to the Garbally College Special Class Administration of Medication Policy.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Common Ailments requiring Students to Stay at Home or to Visit GP**

**CHICKEN POX:** The student should not attend school until all scabs are dry and crusted. This is usually 5-7 days after appearance of rash.

**DIARRHOEA:** When a student has had diarrhoea due to infection, he should only return to school once 48 hours have passed following the last loose bowel movement. For example, if a student has his 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 student 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 student develops a temperature, 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 student should be kept at home until these have subsided and he is able to participate in the normal school curriculum.

**MILD COLD SYMPTOMS:** If a student's mild cold symptoms would prevent him 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. Students 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 student 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 student 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 student returns to school. So long as the treatment begins before bedtime, the student may attend school the next day.

**RINGWORM:** A student 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 student may return to school.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Internal School Procedures when Student is Unwell**

- If a class teacher/ SNA is concerned that a student is unwell, she/ he will inform one of the Special Class Coordinators/ Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Having observed the child, the Class Coordinator/ DP or Principal and the class SNA will decide as to whether the student is well enough to stay at school.
- If the student needs to go home because he has an infectious illness, or is too unwell to participate in school activities, the parents/ guardians will be informed.

- In the case of a student who is unwell and is awaiting collection, staff will ensure that the student is supervised, reassured and made as comfortable as possible.
- If the student has an infectious condition:
  - further contact with other Students will be limited by moving the student to a separate space in the classroom or by removing him from the classroom
  - all other necessary precautions will be taken to limit the spread of infection, i.e. careful handwashing and use of suitable sanitising cleaning products, as required

**In the case of a student who is seriously unwell, for example;**

**Epilepsy-the procedures are outlined in each student's care plan.**