



HeadStart

International School Phuket

Is my child too ill for school?

A Guide for Parents

When your child is unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. These simple guidelines should help.

Not every illness needs to keep your child from school. If your child is absent, please inform the Homeroom Teacher as soon as possible.

Use common sense when deciding whether or not your child is too ill to attend school. Ask yourself the following questions.

- **Is my child well enough to do the activities of the school day? If not, keep your child at home.**
- **Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff? If so, keep your child at home.**
- **Would I take a day off work if I had this condition? If so, keep your child at home.**

Common conditions

If your child is ill, it's likely to be due to one of a few minor health conditions. Whether you send your child to school will depend on **how severe** you think the illness is.

Use this guidance to help you make that judgement.

Remember: if you're concerned about your child's health, consult a Doctor.

- **Cough and cold.** A child with a minor cough or cold may attend school. If the cold is accompanied by a raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school, visit the Doctor and return to school 24 hours after they start to feel better. If your child has a more severe and long-lasting cough, consult your Doctor. They can give guidance on whether your child should stay off school.
- **Raised temperature.** If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. At HeadStart, we advise parents to keep their child at home if they have a temperature of over 100 F (37.8 C) They can return 24 - 48 hours after they start to feel better.
- **Rash.** Skin rashes can be the first sign of many infectious illnesses, such as Hand, Foot and Mouth, Chickenpox and Measles. Children with these conditions shouldn't attend school. If your child has a rash, Please get advice from the hospital before sending them to school.

- **Headache.** A child with a minor headache doesn't usually need to be kept off school. Make sure your child is drinking plenty of water. If the headache is more severe or is accompanied by other symptoms, such as raised temperature or drowsiness, then keep the child off school and consult a Doctor.
- **Vomiting and diarrhoea.** Children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting should definitely be kept off school until at least 48 hours after their symptoms have gone. Most cases of diarrhoea and vomiting in children get better without treatment, but if symptoms persist, seek advice from the hospital.
- **Sore throat.** A sore throat alone doesn't have to keep a child from school. But if it's accompanied by a raised temperature, your child should stay at home.
- **Tummy ache.** A tummy ache or the sniffles do not meet the criteria to keep them home – even if these symptoms are accompanied by a theatrical presentation of tears.
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth.** If you suspect Hand, Foot and Mouth, please keep your child at home, see a Doctor as soon as possible, inform the school and provide a medical certificate. Your child must be kept at home for at least 7 days. .
- **Chickenpox.** If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all their spots have crusted over

Inform the school

It is important to remember that it is very common for children to become tired and unwell usually around the second, third or fourth week of a new school term. Do not panic! It is natural for a child to feel like this and some children can even experience between 8 - 10 colds or fevers per year. They are getting back into the school routines and back into an environment with many children.

Even with a rigorous cleaning program in place, schools can be breeding grounds for germs and it is virtually impossible to keep them completely germ free. Children share everything from scissors to snacks and being exposed to germs is part of everyday life. However, this exposure to different viruses and bacteria can help to strengthen a child's immune system and give them better protection against diseases later in life.

If your child is showing symptoms of having a mild fever or virus and you do keep them off school, lots of fluids and plenty of rest, usually seem to do the trick. However, sometimes a trip to the doctor is necessary. Worsening symptoms such as dehydration or rashes will require immediate attention from the Doctor.

At HeadStart, we suggest that you keep your child at home if they have a fever over 100 F (37.8 C), runny nose (green) or severe coughing, and any vomiting or diarrhea. Persistent

coughs can be signs of bronchitis or pneumonia, and fevers are often an indication of a viral infection.

First, you must inform the school if your child is going to be absent. Either contact the school office or email the Homeroom Teacher. Please indicate the reason for keeping your child at home.

Second, if you take your child to the Doctor, please send a copy of the medical certificate into school so we can monitor the illnesses within the department.

Third, if your child has been recovering from a serious virus, please keep them off school a further 24 hours and when all symptoms have passed.

Medicine, If your child has been recovering from an infection that has required medicine, please complete the medicine at home and keep your child off school for a further 24 hours to ensure a full recovery has been made.

If you have given medicine to your child before school, please inform the Homeroom Teacher. Medicines will usually wear off around late morning or lunchtime and the fever could present itself again.

Overall just watch out for any of the warning signs stated earlier on this page. If you have any concerns or worries, take your child to a medical centre or hospital and get them seen by a Doctor. You, as parents will be the best judge regarding your child's health.

Swimming At HeadStart we encourage swimming from an early age. However, we do also understand that there might be times, when your child has been recovering from a fever, that you may not want them to swim. Again, please send an email directly to the Homeroom teacher explaining the situation and if your child has been advised not swim by a Doctor, please submit a medical certificate to the school.

If you do have any questions or queries, please email the Homeroom Teacher, the school office or Mrs. Scott (fscott@headstartphuket.com)