

## **Christian Education Center Good Health Policy**

### **General Overview**

The Christian Education Center focuses on providing a healthy and safe environment for the well-being of each child and staff member. We work hard to maintain safe and hygienic conditions at all times. For this reason, we adhere to a strict Good Health policy. Our health care policy reflects the current child care licensing regulations from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) as well as the Texas Department of Health's division for infectious disease control.

### **Reading a child's behavior and symptoms**

Our goal is to work with you within the framework of our health policy to determine when your child is well enough to participate in a group setting. While we try to set clear and precise guidelines for when a child is too sick to be at school and/or when s/he is well enough to return to a group setting, please keep in mind that a child's behavior is often the key indicator of his/her health and overall ability to have a successful day at school. Like adults, each child has a unique response to illness. Mild symptoms may make some children irritable, inflexible, or dependent, while others may not complain at all. You know your child's individual reaction to the onset of illness and we value your input.

Based on your child's overall behavior during the past 24 hours, parents need to decide daily if their child is able to participate in a group setting. Our licensing guidelines state that parents and teachers must indicate daily (upon arrival) that each child is well and can attend school that day. Viral illnesses such as colds, coughs, and flu cannot be treated with antibiotics; they must run their course. Treatment of such illnesses consists of extra care, rest, fluids and possibly acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Generally, all children who are ill need a familiar adult close by who can give them special attention. Children seek out familiar environments: a cuddly lap, a soft pillow, or a quiet area. They prefer non-taxing activities. The normal dynamics of participating in a group, such as waiting to take a turn or negotiating over the use of a toy, become too overwhelming for a child who is not feeling well. How do we arrive at the decision to send your child home for illness?

If a child does not seem well, we will do our best to provide tender, loving care. Since our staff members are not trained to diagnose illness, the following policies will be followed at all times. When your child's behavior indicates that s/he cannot be in a group setting, even if s/he is without a fever, we will contact a parent. We are required to care for ill children apart from other children, and our limited facilities and staff require this be kept to a minimum; therefore, parents will be contacted to pick up their child immediately. We appreciate your understanding and support of these important rules. By keeping your child at home when they are ill, or are not responding to medical treatments, you are helping us maintain a healthier environment for everyone. Our goal is to be sure each child is healthy and happy during school.

With this in mind, teachers are required, by DFPS, to make a daily health check of each child in their class. If during the day a teacher notices that a child is not participating in a typical fashion (e.g. not eating snack or lunch, or is tired or overly cranky), the teacher will call an administrator for a temperature check and to describe their observations of the child.

At this point, if your child has any notable signs of illness such as a fever at or above 100.6 degrees orally or forehead, 99.6 under the arm, or 101.6 in the ear, a rash, or appears languid, pale, or completely out of sorts, the administrator will usually decide your child should be sent home for his/her comfort and the wellbeing of others. If a parent cannot be reached, the administrator will contact the persons listed on your emergency form. All parents are required to provide three emergency contact persons and phone numbers in addition to themselves. Please keep all of these numbers up to date with the school office. If, on the other hand, your child has none of these symptoms (but just doesn't feel well), the administrator will probably offer a remedy such as cold water, going to the bathroom, etc.; and have your child return to his/her class. The teachers will keep an eye out for further symptoms. Sometimes, at this point, we will call you to give you a heads up that your child may be getting ill and may need to be picked up early. We also make this phone call to touch base with you to see if there is something we should know about that could be causing your child to feel ill.

If you are asked to pick up your child, please respect the judgment of the Christian Education Center staff in these situations. Remember that it is the teacher and administrator who are observing your child in the school environment and the call is motivated by wanting what is best for your child and his or her classmates.

If your child is sent home, s/he may not return to school for a full 24 hours after s/he is symptom and fever free, unmedicated. This policy is to facilitate in your child's recovery, and to prevent the potential spread of disease and although your child may appear well the very next day, they may still be contagious and/or not up to a full day of school. When you pick up your child you will receive a Symptom Record, which will state our observations, their symptoms, and the soonest your child can return to school in accordance with our health policy. If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness by a physician, it must be reported to the front office so we can keep a record of it and inform others that their child may have been exposed to the illness. This plan of action is required per our licensing regulations.

## **Is my child well enough to go to school?**

It is often not easy to decide in the early morning whether or not your child should go to school. Please remember that during the beginning stages of any illness, a child is highly contagious and is likely to infect other children and teachers. Our philosophy is proactive in the prevention of spreading illness and to provide the best possible care for each child in our program. By using the Alphabetical Guidelines For Illness & Attending School that follow, we can work together to provide a healthy environment for all children, students, and teachers in our community.

**Please note: all temporary illnesses require a 24-hour period without symptoms or symptom relieving medication (i.e. Fever reduction medication). This means if your child is sent home sick from school s/he may not return until s/he has been home for an entire day.** (For example, if your child is sent home on a Tuesday, the earliest s/he may return to school would be Thursday.) Children may not return to school mid-day of the following day if they have been sent home with an illness.

## **Alphabetical Guidelines for Illness & Attending School**

The following list is a helpful tool for you as a parent to know when your child should or should not come to school. Please refer to this alphabetical list of illnesses to confirm what is required for your child to return to school after an illness. If you have further questions please contact the front office.

### **Common Childhood Illnesses Listed Alphabetically**

**Asthma And Breathing Distress** - If your child experiences a recurring illness involving breathing distress we require medication accompanied by the proper authorization forms to be kept at school at all times. Although this medication will be kept at school, please note our approach to using such medication is conservative. We will always try several other means of relieving your child's breathing difficulty before administering medication.

**Chicken Pox** - Your child may not return to school until all lesions have dried and crusted and your child has been fever free for at least 24 hours.

**Colds** - If your child has a cold that persists beyond 10 days and is not getting better, s/he should be seen by a doctor. In general, colds last 7-10 days. After 5 days, secretions will be thicker and colored. A child may stay in group care if his/her activity level and behavior is normal, and s/he is without fever. If your child has any of the symptoms listed under non-specific viral illness during the course of the cold, then s/he is not ready to be in a group setting.

**Conjunctivitis** - Conjunctivitis is commonly known as 'pink-eye' and is associated with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids especially after sleep, eye pain, and redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye. When your child is diagnosed with conjunctivitis s/he may return to group care after s/he has been on antibiotic drops for a minimum of 24 hours and shows no other symptoms of illness, or if you have a note from your child's pediatrician on prescription letterhead stating their conjunctivitis is no longer contagious.

**Coughs** - A cough can spread an infection among young children faster than any other ailment. Please bring a note on prescription letterhead stating your child can return to a group setting and the cough is not contagious.

**Coxsackie Virus** - This virus is indicated by sores in the mouth and on the hands and feet, usually accompanied by a fever. Your child may return 24 hours after diagnosis with a doctor's note, or if s/he is fever free and the rash has cleared. If your child has any of the symptoms listed under non-specific viral illness during the course of the virus, then s/he is not ready to be in a group setting.

**Diarrhea** - If your child has had three or more loose stools within a 24 hour period this needs to be treated as a potentially contagious intestinal flu. Like a cough, this type of flu spreads rapidly and therefore we are very proactive when excluding children with these symptoms. If the diarrhea is accompanied by stomach cramps, or any other symptoms your child needs to be excluded from a group setting. If the diarrhea is the result of diet or medication, the stool must be either contained within a diaper or by the child's ability to use the toilet in order for them to participate in a group setting.

**Ear Infections** - Middle ear infections generally are not considered contagious. A child may return to group care while being treated for an ear infection ONLY IF: s/he is fever free for a full 24 hours and has no other symptoms including those listed under non-specific viral illness.

**Fever** - If your child has a fever 100.6 degrees or higher without any other symptoms, s/he needs to be excluded from a group setting until s/he has been fever free, without fever reducing medication, for a full 24 hours.

**Hepatitis** - If your child is diagnosed with hepatitis, s/he may not return to a group setting until the week after the onset of illness has been diagnosed or until after immune serum globulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff in the program as directed by the NYS Department of Health. A note from your child's pediatrician on prescription letterhead is required for your child to return to a group setting.

**Immunized Diseases: Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Pertussis, And Tuberculosis** - Each child in our program is required to be immunized against these illnesses. In the rare event of an outbreak of any of these diseases, the child would return to group care only when the health department has been notified and your pediatrician provides a note on prescription letterhead stating s/he is non-infectious. (Please note in this case the Department of Health supersedes your child's pediatrician.)

**Impetigo** - A skin irritation with itching accompanied by red areas with pimples and yellow/brown crusts. A rash with this appearance must be diagnosed and treated for 24 hours before your child can participate in a group setting.

**Infestation** - (ex. Scabies, Pinworms, and Head Lice) Your child must remain home until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.

**Mouth Sores** - (ex. Herpes Simplex; Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease) If your child has symptoms related to mouth sores or is diagnosed with any of these illnesses, you will need a note from your child's pediatrician on prescription letterhead stating when your child can return to a group setting.

**Molluscum** - Molluscum contagiosum is an infection caused by a [poxvirus](#) (molluscum contagiosum virus). If you notice lesions on a child's skin, it is reasonable to inform the child's parents and to request a doctor's note. Only a healthcare professional can diagnose molluscum contagiosum. Lesions not covered by clothing should be covered with a watertight bandage.

**Non-Specific Viral Illness** - If your child has a viral illness that is still running its course and s/he shows any of the following symptoms: decreased activity or appetite and/or increased need for rest, increased irritability, and the need for constant adult attention, then your child is not ready to participate in a group setting. Please remember your child must be fever free for 24 hours to return to school.

**Skin Rashes** - If the rash is associated with fever and/or behavior change, your child needs to be excluded from a group setting. A fungal infection of the skin (ex. Ring Worm) should be diagnosed and treated for 24 hours before your child returns. Also, if the rash covers the entire body or is specific to the mouth or hands and feet, the rash needs to be diagnosed and treated for 24 hours.

**Strep** - If your child is diagnosed with strep throat/scarlet fever s/he must be excluded from a group setting until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated, and your child has been without fever or fever reduction medication for a full 24 hours.

**UTI** - Urinary tract infections are not considered infectious and therefore your child may attend school **ONLY IF** s/he has no other symptoms, is not uncomfortable, is able to use the toilet prior to urinating and is able to participate in group activities.

**Vomiting** - If your child has thrown up within a 24 hour period please do not send them to school. Likewise, if your child throws-up at school you will be asked to pick them up immediately. Stomach flus travel rampantly through a group and therefore we need to be fully proactive on this one.