

10/8/15

From the School Nurse:

I can't believe fall is here....As the seasons begin and the weather patterns change, so will the episodes of acute illness. Meeting the needs of your children is my main priority. I am seriously committed to the continuity of care that has been provided to your children in the past. I have tried to make contact with parents of children with specific health needs. Should I have missed contacting you, or you are interested in providing information regarding your student, please feel free to phone 242-4820.

I am beginning to see many children in my office on a daily basis. As parents we know that preventive measures are the key to keeping children healthy. We also know that infectious agents are easily transmitted through direct and indirect contact, as well as airborne. Preventive practices that are taught at home such as good handwashing; covering your mouth when sneezing or coughing; and remaining at home when ill are all necessities to maintaining a safe and healthy school.

The Parent Handbook offers some guidelines to follow in deciding if your child is too ill to be in school. I am also available if you would like to communicate with me personally.

The guidelines include:

- An oral temperature of 101 degrees F unless there is a known noninfectious cause of the fever. People need to be fever free 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications before returning to school.
- Illness that disrupts the students learning or poses a risk of the disease spreading to others.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without affecting the health and safety of other children.
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhea. Please allow 24 hours before the return to school.
- An undiagnosed rash associated with fever or behavior changes that suggest the presence of a contagious illness.

Notifying the nurse when your child is ill is a significant help. I work closely with Polk County Health to monitor illness trends throughout our community. Protecting the DTS children and staff from exposure to infectious contagions is again a priority.

Head Lice (*Pediculosis Capitis*) is another condition we begin talking about at this time of the year. This condition is not life threatening but can be a nuisance.

Head lice is a common contagious infection that OFTEN occurs in schools. It is caused by infestation of the head louse and is it usually very itchy. Children will complain that they feel like something is crawling or itching their head. Head lice can occur in anyone, every socioeconomic group, has nothing to do with cleanliness, and usually occurs in ages 3-11 years. Head lice infestation is most commonly seen in situations where there is close personal contact. Lice feed on human blood, pets and other animals do not spread the infection. Lice crawl. They do not jump or fly. You may see moving lice on your child's scalp or nits(whitish eggs) on the hair shaft.

Should your child get head lice, please treat with a pediculocide before returning to school. Over the counter medicated shampoo is effective yet can be harsh. Please use as directed. Usually a fine toothed comb will help with removing the whitish nits on the hair shaft and will prevent the eggs from hatching. Once treated, clothing, bed linens and towels should be washed in hot water.

To be preventative, checking your student hair and scalp frequently is a great help. Educating your child not to share combs, brushes, hats, or headsets also helps. Please notify me should you discover head lice on your child's scalp.

I truly look forward to meeting and caring for your children with the hope that all remains well.

Beth Angier, RN