



**General Guidelines for the Control of Outbreaks in School and Childcare Settings**  
**School Exclusion List**

This chart provides information about some communicable disease that may occur in schools, day care centers, summer camps and other group settings for children. It is meant as a guide to answer questions frequently asked of persons responsible for groups of children. This is not an all-inclusive list of significant diseases or a comprehensive guide to all information about each disease or condition. More specific information about these and other diseases may be obtained by contacting your local health department or the New Jersey Department of Health, Communicable Disease Service. **Outbreaks and suspect outbreaks of illness are immediately reportable to the Local Health Department where the school is located.**<sup>1</sup>

Fever is defined as a body temperature  $\geq 100.4$  F (38°C) from any site.

Infection or Condition	Common Signs and Symptoms	Exclusion for School/Daycare Children	Exclusion for Childcare Provider and/or Food Handler	Notes	Individual Cases Reportable to Health Department
<b>Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI)</b>	Fever $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ and rhinorrhea, nasal congestion, sore throat, or cough in absence of a known cause.	Until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and symptoms are improving. <sup>2</sup>			
<b>COVID-19</b>	New or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory or taste disorder. Fever, chills, myalgia, headache, sore throat, GI, fatigue, congestion, rhinorrhea	Until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication <b>AND</b> symptoms are improving.		Once individuals return to normal activities, they should take additional precautions for the next five days. <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Diarrhea Unspecified (organism/cause not identified or not yet determined)</b>	Defined by stool that is occurring more frequent or is less formed in consistency than usual in the child and not associated with changes of diet.	Exclude children whose stool frequency exceeds 2 above normal per 24 hours for that child.  Exclude diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper and toilet-trained	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until 24 hrs. after symptoms resolve.	See norovirus  Medical evaluation for stools with blood or mucus.	

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		children if diarrhea is causing "accidents". Until diarrhea has ceased for 24 hours (e.g., last episode Monday at noon, child may return on Wednesday).			
<b>E. coli – Shiga toxin producing E. coli (STEC)</b>	Nausea, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps.	Daycare: Symptom free and two negative stools <sup>3,4</sup> .  School: Symptom free.	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until symptom free and have two negative stool tests. <sup>3,4</sup>	Stools of all childcare staff, attendees and household contacts with diarrhea, should be tested in outbreak situations.	Yes <sup>5</sup>
<b>Fever (only)</b>	Elevation of normal body temperature.  Body temperature $\geq 100.4^\circ \text{F}$ ( $38^\circ \text{C}$ ) from any site	Until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.			
<b>Fifth Disease (Erythema infectiosum)</b>	Mild cold symptoms followed by rash, characterized by "slapped face" appearance.	No exclusion.		Pregnant women and immuno-compromised persons should seek medical advice.	
<b>Hand Foot and Mouth (coxsackievirus)</b>	Fever, sore throat, malaise, ulcers in the mouth and blisters on hands and feet.	Daycare: Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and no longer drooling steadily due to mouth sores.  School: Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.		Most often seen in summer and early fall.	

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<b>Hepatitis A</b>	Jaundice	1 week after onset of jaundice or illness and fever free (if symptoms are mild).	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food 1 week after onset of jaundice or illness and fever free (if symptoms are mild).		Yes, immediately <sup>5</sup>
<b>Herpes Gladiatorum (“Wrestlers Herpes”)</b>	Cluster of blisters typically head neck and shoulders. Fever, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, burning or tingling skin.	Sports: All lesions healed with well adhered scabs and no new vesicle formation and no swollen lymph nodes near area involved. <sup>6</sup>		Athletes with direct skin to skin contact with infected individual must be excluded from contact activity <sup>6</sup>	
<b>Impetigo</b>	Small, red pimples or fluid-filled blisters with crusted yellow scabs.	Until treatment is initiated  Sports: Exclude until deemed non-infectious and adequately treated by HCP <sup>6</sup>		Found most often on the face but may be anywhere on the body. When possible, lesions should be covered until dry.	
<b>Influenza<sup>1</sup></b>	Sudden onset of fever, headache, chills, myalgia, sore throat, nasal congestion, cough, mild pinkeye, fatigue, abdominal pain.	Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.			
<b>Measles</b>	Initially characterized by fever, reddened eyes, runny nose, cough, followed by maculopapular rash that starts on the head and spreads down and out.	Through 4 days from rash onset.		Rash onset = day 0	Yes, immediately <sup>5</sup>
<b>Meningitis, Bacterial (including Haemophilus influenzae)</b>	High fever, headache and stiff neck.	Until adequately treated, 24 hours after initiation of effective antimicrobial therapy.			Yes, immediately <sup>5</sup>
<b>Meningitis, Viral</b>	High fever, headache and stiff neck.	Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.			

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<b>MRSA (methicillin-resistant <i>staphylococcus aureus</i>)</b>	Red bumps that progress to pus-filled boils or abscesses.	If lesions cannot be adequately covered.  Sports: Exclude until deemed non-infectious and adequately treated by HCP <sup>6</sup>			Two or more non-household, culture-confirmed cases of MRSA that occur within a 14-day period and may be linked.
<b>Mumps</b>	Fever with swelling and tenderness of one or both parotid glands located below and in front of ears.	Until 5 days after onset of parotid swelling and fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.		Parotitis = day 0	Yes <sup>5</sup>
<b>Norovirus</b>	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps. May also have low grade fever, chills, body aches, headache.	Until 24-48 hrs. after symptoms resolve and fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food 48-72 hrs. after symptoms resolve. Staff may perform duties not associated with food preparation 24 hrs. after symptoms resolve.	Exclusion time on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the local health department (i.e., during an outbreak).	
<b>Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)</b>	May affect one or both eyes.  Pink or red conjunctivae with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep and eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye.	Symptom-free, which means redness and drainage are gone OR approved for return by HCP.		There are several types of conjunctivitis including; bacterial, viral, allergic and chemical.  Sometimes will occur early in the course of a viral respiratory infection that has other signs or symptoms.	

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<b>Pertussis</b>	Initial stage begins with URI symptoms and increasingly irritating cough. Paroxysmal stage is characterized by repeated episodes of violent cough broken by high pitched inspiratory whoop. Older children may not have whoop.	After 5 days of appropriate antibiotic therapy completed. If untreated, through 21 days from cough onset.			Yes, immediately <sup>5</sup>
<b>Rubella (German measles)</b>	Slight fever, rash of variable character lasting about 3 days; enlarged head and neck lymph nodes. Joint pain may occur.	Through 7 days from rash onset			Yes, immediately <sup>5</sup>
<b>Salmonella Typhi (typhoid fever)</b>	Fever, anorexia, lethargy, malaise, headache.	Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication AND  Daycare: Symptom free and three negative stool tests <sup>3</sup>  School: Symptom free.	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until symptom free and three negative stool tests. <sup>3</sup>	Stools of all childcare staff, attendees and household contacts with diarrhea, should be tested in outbreak situations.	Yes <sup>5</sup>
<b>Salmonella non-typhoid</b>	Fever, nausea, vomiting, non-bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps.	Symptom free <sup>4</sup>  Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until symptom free and have two negative stool tests. <sup>3</sup>		Yes <sup>5</sup>
<b>Scabies</b>	Itchy raised areas around finger webs, wrists, elbows, armpits, beltline, and/or genitalia. Extensive scratching.	Until after treatment has been given.  Contact Sports <sup>6</sup>		Refer for treatment at the end of school day and exclude until treatment has been started.	
<b>Shigella</b>	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (may be bloody, and abdominal cramps.	Daycare: Symptom free and 2 negative stools <sup>3</sup>  School: Symptom free.	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until symptom free and have two negative stool tests. <sup>3</sup>	Stools of all childcare staff, attendees and household contacts with diarrhea, should be tested in outbreak situations.	Yes <sup>5</sup>

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<b>Staphylococcal or streptococcal skin infections (not including MRSA &amp; Impetigo)</b>	Honey crusted draining lesions, skin lesions with a reddened base.	If lesions cannot be adequately covered.  Sports: If lesions cannot be adequately covered or drainage cannot be contained by the bandage <sup>6</sup>			
<b>Streptococcal pharyngitis (strep throat)</b>	Fever, sore throat, exudative tonsillitis or pharyngitis, enlarged lymph nodes. May also have a sandpaper-like rash.	Until at least 12-24 hrs. after antibiotic treatment has been initiated and child able to participate in activities AND  Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.		Exclusion time may vary on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the local health department (i.e., during an outbreak).	
<b>Tinea capitis (Ringworm of the scalp)</b>	Hair loss in area of lesions.	Until after treatment has been started.  Contact Sports <sup>6</sup>		Refer for treatment at the end of school day and exclude until treatment has been started.	
<b>Tinea corporis (Ringworm of the body)</b>	Circular well demarcated lesion that can involve the face, trunk, or limbs. Itching is common.	Until after treatment has been started.  Contact Sports <sup>6</sup>		Refer for treatment at the end of school day and exclude until treatment has been started.	
<b>Varicella (Chickenpox)</b>	Slight fever with eruptions which become vesicular. Lesions occur in successive crops with several stages of maturity at the same time.	Until all lesions have dried and crusted usually 5 days after onset of rash.			Yes <sup>5</sup>
<b>Vomiting</b>	Children with vomiting from an infection often have diarrhea and sometimes fever.	If vomiting more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours and is not from a known non-communicable condition (e.g., gastroesophageal reflux).	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until 24 hrs. after symptoms resolve.	See Norovirus	

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		Until at least 24 hours after last episode (e.g., last episode Monday at noon, child may return on Wednesday).			
<b>Yersiniosis</b>	Fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea (sometimes bloody).	Until diarrhea has resolved.	Exclude from cooking, preparing and touching food until diarrhea has resolved and they have one negative stool test. <sup>3</sup>		Yes <sup>5</sup>

**Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion**

Temporary exclusion is recommended when the illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the staff of the school or program; the illness results in a greater need for care than the staff of the program determine they can provide without compromising their ability to care for other children; the child has any of the following conditions, unless a health professional determines the child’s condition does not require exclusion, appears to be severely ill (this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash, fever (as defined above) and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea).

<sup>1</sup> An outbreak may be occurring if: several children who exhibit similar symptoms are in the same classroom, same wing or attended a common event. There is an increase in school absences with report of similar symptoms. Two or more students diagnosed with the same reportable disease. A single case of a highly infectious disease exists or is suspected to exist.

<sup>2</sup> See Respiratory Virus Guidance for K-12 Schools, Youth Camps, and Early Care and Education Programs at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/schoolhealth.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> Negative stool specimens taken at least 24 apart and at least 48 hours after cessation of antibiotic treatment

<sup>4</sup> During an outbreak negative stool specimens may be required before return to school and/or food handling

<sup>5</sup> For specific reporting requirements refer to NJDOH Reporting Requirements <http://nj.gov/health/cd/reporting>

<sup>6</sup> Wrestling and other contact sports refer to [NJDOH School Health](#) (search “Guidelines for Skin Infections in Contact Sports”) for exclusion guidance

**Sources:**

- A. American Academy of Pediatrics. Red Book 31<sup>st</sup> Edition
- B. NJDOH <http://nj.gov/health/cd/topics> Communicable Disease Chapters
- C. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>
- D. National Collegiate Athletic Association. [NCAA 2014-15 Sports Medicine Handbook](#)
- E. American Academy of Pediatrics. Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools a Quick Reference Guide, 5th Edition