



Diarrhoea and Vomiting exclusion - the 48-hour rule

From time-to-time children are sick (vomit) either at home or at school. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish between the causes, and therefore it is essential that the same rule of exclusion applies in all cases of vomiting or diarrhoea.

In the Health Protection Agency document, “Guidelines for the Control of Infection and Communicable Disease in School and Early Years Settings”, the guidance is:

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and staff and can be caused by different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. In general, it is recommended that any staff member or child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the ‘48-hour rule’) and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours. We appreciate that this is inconvenient in many cases, and you may not believe your child is ill, but you will appreciate that we do this in all cases, and it should reduce the risk of infection for all children in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting.

Thank you for your understanding with this.

Further information can be found here:

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf