

## **Management of Infectious Diseases: Staying Home When Ill**

### **Definition**

Infectious diseases are diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another.<sup>1</sup>

In order to prevent the spread of disease and ensure that students are fit to learn, it is important that they be kept home from school when they are not well. Students should not be sent to school if they have experienced any of the following symptoms or conditions:

- A temperature reading of above 37.5C in the past 24 hours (i.e., the student should not return to school until they have been fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours)
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Chills
- Strep Throat: the student must have been taking an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school
- Bad cold, with a very runny nose, sore throat or a bad cough, especially if it has kept the child awake at night
- Influenza and COVID-19: the student should stay away from school for at least 5 days after the start of symptoms and should be fever free for 2 days without using medication. The onset of symptoms (such as high fever) is considered to be day 0, so in total students should stay away from school for 6 days.
- A rash where the cause is unknown
- Suspected conjunctivitis (Pink eye)

Some infectious diseases are highly contagious and require specific reporting and management. Please notify the Health Office immediately ([nurse@yis.ac.jp](mailto:nurse@yis.ac.jp) / 045-621-4027) if a student is suspected of having these diseases, which include:

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ● COVID-19                   | ● Norovirus                |
| ● Influenza A/B              | ● Mumps                    |
| ● Whooping cough (pertussis) | ● Rubella (German measles) |
| ● Polio                      | ● Meningococcal disease    |
| ● Measles                    | ● Rotavirus                |
| ● Chicken Pox                |                            |

The school nurse liaises with local health authorities for guidance and to coordinate any necessary response.

### **Testing**

Parents of students who develop symptoms of COVID-19, influenza or other infectious diseases are advised to consult with their family physician and have their child tested to confirm the diagnosis and receive guidance on treatment and isolation periods. Rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 and influenza A/B are also available at pharmacies or via Amazon or other online providers for use at home. Parents are requested to inform the YIS Health Office of test results so that the school nurse can monitor infection rates among classes and grade levels and advise when it is OK for students to return to school.

## **Management of Suspected Infectious Diseases in School**

In the event that a member of YIS staff becomes aware of or is notified of a student with a suspected infectious disease, they will immediately notify the Health Office and school leadership. If the student is in school, they will stay in the Health Office and parents will be notified to come and pick the student up at school. Parents are requested to do so as soon as possible, even when inconvenient, so as to minimize the exposure of the sick child to the school community and allow the child to get medical attention or go home to rest quickly. With parents' permission, the school nurse may administer a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 and/or influenza.

Students will be required to stay away from school for an isolation period to ensure the risk of infection has passed. Medical providers and/or the school nurse can provide guidance on the length of the isolation period based on the disease and its stage of presentation. Family members should be carefully monitored for symptoms. In the event of an infectious disease being confirmed in one child, parents may be asked to have siblings seen by a doctor to confirm that they are fit to attend school.

## **Management of Suspected Infectious Diseases Out of School (Off Campus Activities)**

In the event of suspected infectious diseases occurring while students are away on Expeditions or other off-campus activities, expedition/activity leaders will, where possible, isolate the affected student(s) and notify the school and parents. Depending on the condition of the student and the location of the expedition/activity, parents may be asked to come pick their child up. The expedition/activity leader will also work with the host school, facility or outdoor education provider to seek guidance from their local Public Health Center.

## **Refusing Attendance**

In the event that students come to school before the end of the recommended isolation period, or the school nurse believes that the student hasn't recovered sufficiently, parents will be contacted and asked to collect them for their own benefit and for the safety of the school community.

## **Immunizations**

The Health Office strongly recommends that all students be immunized against COVID-19 and certain other diseases, as a minimum, in line with the Japanese schedule. ([See immunizations guidance here.](#)) This is particularly important given the international nature of our community and the amount of traveling undertaken. Vaccination requirements vary between countries, so as part of the admissions process the school asks for confirmation from the student's own doctor that immunizations are up to date. Parents are expected to ensure that students continue to receive boosters or additional immunizations as appropriate.

1. State Government of Victoria, Australia