

Sickness Policy – Children

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Next Review Due: July 2026

Our Values

At Young Friends, we prioritise the health and safety of the children, families and staff in our community. We take illness seriously, act with precaution, and rely on open communication and shared responsibility to protect each other.

- *Sustainability – We prevent unnecessary spread of illness and reduce strain on the team*
- *Respect – We trust families to be honest and respond with fairness and care*
- *Authenticity – No child is forced to stay if unwell – we put wellbeing first*
- *Supportive Leadership – Staff are trained to spot symptoms early and act promptly*
- *Community – One child's illness affects everyone; we act in the interest of all*

Policy Statement

This policy outlines how we manage children's illness in the setting. We have strict exclusion periods, clear expectations for families, and trained staff who monitor wellbeing and take action when needed.

We understand that occasional illness is part of childhood, but we will never compromise the safety of our setting due to pressure, convenience or unclear boundaries.

When Children Should Not Attend

Children must not attend nursery if they have:

- *A fever over 37.5°C*
- *Vomiting or diarrhoea (see exclusion below)*
- *Unidentified rash or contagious skin condition*
- *Eye discharge or infection*
- *Symptoms of COVID-19, flu or other contagious respiratory illness*
- *Excessive tiredness, clinginess, or changes in behaviour suggesting they are not well enough to participate*

Exclusion Periods – Extended Guidance

Condition	Exclusion Period
Vomiting or Diarrhoea	48 hours after last episode (even if child seems better)
Fever (over 37.5°C)	Until fever-free for 24 hours without medication
COVID-19 / suspected COVID	As per NHS guidance (usually 3–5 days if well)
Chickenpox	Until all spots are scabbed over and crusted
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted OR 48 hours after starting antibiotics
Conjunctivitis	24–48 hours after treatment starts or when clear

Condition	Exclusion Period
Flu or Influenza-like illness	Minimum 48 hours and symptom-free
Hand, Foot and Mouth	Exclude if ulcers, drooling or generally unwell — return when well
Head lice	May return once live lice are treated
Threadworms	May return once treatment has begun
Slapped Cheek Syndrome (Fifth Disease)	No exclusion unless child is unwell
Measles	4 days from onset of rash AND fully recovered
Mumps	5 days from swelling onset AND well again
Rubella	5 days from rash AND fully recovered
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after antibiotics begin
Tonsillitis (bacterial/viral)	Until well and fever-free (minimum 48hrs if antibiotics given)
Whooping Cough	5 days from start of antibiotics or 21 days if untreated
Ear Infection	Until fever subsides and child is well
Respiratory Infections (e.g. RSV)	Until child is symptom-free or significantly improved
Scabies	24 hours after treatment starts
Ringworm	After treatment begins and affected area covered
Cold Sores	No exclusion unless severe, weeping, or if child is unwell
Diphtheria, Hepatitis, Meningitis etc	Must be cleared by Public Health before return

This table is reviewed regularly and updated in line with NHS and UKHSA advice.

What Happens if a Child Becomes Unwell at Nursery

- *A staff member will gently remove the child from the group and provide calm 1:1 care*
- *Temperature and symptoms will be checked and logged*
- *Parents will be called immediately — we do not keep sick children onsite*
- *The child must be collected within 1 hour, or as agreed by management*
- *A comfortable, quiet space will be used while the child waits*

Medication and Calpol

We do not administer fever reducers like Calpol or Ibuprofen unless:

- *It is part of an agreed Medical or Care Plan (e.g. post-surgery, ongoing treatment)*
- *It has been prescribed and logged clearly with dosage and purpose*
- *Parents have signed the appropriate form and staff are aware*

Children must not attend nursery:

- *After receiving Calpol purely to mask symptoms (e.g. fever, pain)*
- *If the underlying illness has not resolved*

If Calpol is given before attending, parents must inform us with the reason.

Returning After Illness

Children may return to nursery when:

- *They have completed the required exclusion time*
- *They are symptom-free and able to participate fully*
- *They are no longer requiring fever medication*
- *They are no longer a risk to others*

Staff reserve the right to refuse entry if a child is still clearly unwell or contagious.

Chronic or Ongoing Conditions

Children with ongoing medical conditions (e.g. asthma, allergies, epilepsy) will:

- Have an up-to-date Care Plan created with families and healthcare providers*
 - Be supported with training for staff and clear medication protocols*
 - Be cared for with dignity and attentiveness, with regular plan reviews*
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Family Responsibilities

Families are expected to:

- Inform the nursery by 8:00am if a child is off sick*
 - Be honest and clear about symptoms and timing*
 - Never send a child if they are unfit for group life or showing signs of illness*
 - Respect that Young Friends will act to protect the wider community*
 - Understand that exclusion is not negotiable and will be enforced fairly*
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Monitoring and Safeguarding

- Staff are trained to identify symptoms and seek help if needed*
 - Management may consult with health professionals in unclear cases*
 - All illness records and medication logs are maintained in accordance with GDPR*
 - Recurring or unclear illness may trigger a wellbeing check with the DSL*
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Linked Policies

- Medication Policy*
 - Accident and Emergency*
 - Infection Control*
 - Staff Sickness*
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection*
 - Partnership with Families*
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Authorisation

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