

## Reducing Absence – Advice and Guidance

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other reasons the **school** deems to be unavoidable. Students will not be allowed to leave school for medical appointments without a note or an appointment card.

Regular days off ill may be challenged by letter, and you may be asked to provide medical evidence for future absences. Lack of any medical evidence for these days off will lead to school not authorising the absence leading to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

High levels of unauthorised absence can lead to the involvement of the schools Senior Attendance Officer (SAO). **The average student in England and Wales has only 6 days absence per year.**

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the student. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This may give them impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

### How to Treat a Cold

The Common Cold is caused by a virus called the Rhinovirus – there are about 400 different strains of Rhinovirus. You can manage cold symptoms yourself by following some simple advice to support your children. They will normally start to feel better within 5 to 7 days. The Regis School is set up to manage and support students with a cold including the Paracetamol Policy, medical breaks if required, First Aid Triage and regular breaks for fluid.

**The Regis School therefore expects students with a common cold to come in to school as normal.**

### General Advice

Until children are feeling better it may help to:

- **Drink plenty of fluids** to replace those lost from sweating and having a runny nose
- **Dress warmly** especially on the way to and home from school
- **Eat healthily** – a low-fat, high-fibre diet is recommended, including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Young people often lose their appetite when they have a cold. This is perfectly normal and should only last a few days. Don't force them to eat if they are not feeling hungry, but alternatives such as soups may help. You may also wish to try some of the medication and remedies described below to help relieve their symptoms.

## Over the counter cold medications.

The main medications used to treat cold symptoms are: -

- **Painkillers** – such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, which can help relieve aches and a high temperature (fever)
- **Decongestants** – which may help relieve a blocked nose
- **Cold medicines** – containing a combination of painkillers and decongestants

These medications are available from pharmacies without a prescription. They are generally safe for older children and adults to take, but might not be suitable for babies, young children, pregnant women, people with certain underlying health conditions and people taking certain other medications.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine before giving it and follow the recommended dosage instructions. If you are not sure which treatments are suitable for your child, speak to a pharmacist for advice. If you purchase medication other than Paracetamol the School is more than happy to hold this in the medical room so your child can access it as required. Please be aware that many "over the counter" medicines contain Paracetamol, so it is important you do not double up on doses.

## What is the difference between a Migraine and a Headache?

The following is some guidance from The Regis medical team around the difference between a migraine and a headache.

### What is a headache?

A Headache is caused by the contraction of muscles **between** the head and neck. ... Although it may feel like it, a headache is not actually a pain in your brain. The brain tells you when other parts of your body hurt, but it can't feel pain itself. Most headaches happen in the nerves, blood vessels, and muscles that cover a person's head and neck. Sometimes the muscles or blood vessels swell, tighten, or go through other changes that stimulate the surrounding nerves or put pressure on them. These nerves send a rush of pain messages to the brain, and this brings on a headache. Most headaches can be relieved or totally avoided by staying hydrated. Dehydration is the most common cause of headache, please encourage your child to drink water throughout the day and carry a water bottle in school. Regis medical can also administer paracetamol which is extremely effective to relieve the pain of a Headache. Please ensure that you have signed the Paracetamol policy enabling Regis medical to administer this to your child.

### What is a Migraine?

In comparison to a Headache a Migraine tends to range from moderate to very severe throbbing pain at the front or the side of the head. It can be unrelenting and carry on for days and **is** accompanied by other symptoms sometimes described as the 'aura' This is where the vision is affected often with flashing lights and what seems like tunnel vision in one or both eyes. A Migraine will often make its sufferer vomit, this can continue for several hours. What triggers a Migraine? Possible migraine triggers include hormonal, emotional, physical, dietary, environmental, and medicinal factors. These triggers are very individual, keeping a diary to see if you can identify a consistent trigger can be beneficial.

Some Migraines can be relieved with over-the-counter medicines such as Migraleve. This drug is specifically designed to treat the effects of a Migraine. If your child's attendance is affected by Migraines on a regular basis, please make an appointment with your GP with a view to providing The Regis school with medical evidence of this diagnosis.

### **Stomach-ache**

Children can go to school if their only symptom is a stomach-ache. It could just be constipation or nerves. Children who have stomach-aches associated with vomiting, diarrhoea or fever should see a doctor. Sharp stomach pain and a rigid belly can be signs of severe constipation, appendicitis, or a bowel obstruction.

Vomit or diarrhoea – students should stay off school for **48 hours** after last episode.