**Handbook for Parents**

**On**

**Common Childhood Diseases**

****

**Updated April 2019**

**GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Monroeville, Pennsylvania

**HEALTH SERVICES**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This booklet was prepared to help you determine if your child is too ill to come to school. It is not intended to be a substitute for the ongoing care from your own physician.

Please use this as a resource in dealing with some common health problems. We hope you find it a valuable guide.

Our best wishes for a healthy school year.

Sincerely,

Gateway School District

Health Services Department

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**ANIMAL BITES**

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* Be sure to vaccinate all domestic dogs and cats.
* If a bite occurs, give first-aid immediately by copious flushing of wound with water or soap/detergent with water.
* Refer for medical treatment by or under direction of a physician.
* Any animal the bites a person should be confined for a ten-day observation period.
* All animal bites should be reported to the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-578-8060 so that an investigation of the case may be made.

**CHICKEN POX**

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Chicken pox is a contagious illness in which blister-like lesions appear on the body. It is caused by a virus. However, because all school age children are vaccinated for chicken pox, the illness is no longer common.

If your child has a rash with blister-like lesions that weep and crust over, then he/she should be seen by a physician.

Your child may return to school two days after the last blisters have crusted. This is approximately 7 to 10 days after the first crop of blisters appear.

There should be no large scabs or seepage on any exposed extremities.

**COMMON COLD**

**COMMON COLD**

A runny nose, water eyes, cough and slight fever are the usual symptoms of the common cold. This is the most common illness seen in the school. Antibiotics are not usually helpful in treating this condition.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Encourage liquids such as juices, Kool Aid, soda pop, popsicles and tea.
2. Use a decongestant medication for a stuffy nose, if your physician approves.
3. Adequate rest is important.
4. Consult with your physician if your child complains of an earache or pulls at his/her ear.
5. Use acetaminophen or Ibuprofen products (e.g. Tylenol or Motrin) for aches and fever.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF:**

1. His/her fever is over 100 °F. Keep your child at home until his/her temperature has been normal, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours.
2. He/she has a runny nose and/or cough and cannot use a tissue without help.
3. He/she will not be able to participate in school activities for a full day.

**CONJUNCTIVITIS OR “PINK EYE”**

**Kjjjkkkk**

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the thin, transparent outer layer of the eyeball and the inner surface of the eyelids. The inflammation causes redness, tearing and occasionally formation of pus. Because of the redness, it is commonly called pink eye and the most common causes are bacteria, viruses and allergies. The first two are quite contagious. Allergic conjunctivitis is usually associated with nasal allergy and rarely causes any pus in the inner corner of the eye; this can be helpful in differentiating contagious from non-contagious varieties.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Consult your physician.
2. Wash hands frequently especially after touching the eye.
3. Keep wash cloths and towels separate from those of other family members.
4. Can use cool compress over the eye.
5. If eye makeup is used, wash brushes and applicators in hot, soapy water and dry thoroughly. Discard liquid eye makeup.

Your child may return to school once he/she has been seen by a physician and has had 24 hours of treatment.

treatment.

**DIARRHEA AND LOOSE STOOLS**

Diarrhea is frequent watery stools. Loose stools are very thin, non-formed, flowing bowel movements. The child may tend to have a loose, watery bowel movement each time he/she eats something.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Give small amounts of clear liquids such as water, weak tea, ginger ale, Kool Aid and Jell-O.
2. Do not give any milk products or citrus juice.
3. After the first day, gradually add foods starting with rice, clear soup, bananas, apple sauce, toast without butter, scrambled eggs.
4. Consult a physician if diarrhea last more than 3 days or high fever develops.

Your child may return to school 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

**FIFTH DISEASE**

**INCUBATION AND SYMPTOMS:**

* *Infectious Agent*
  + Parvovirus B19
* *Incubation*
  + Variable; from 4-20 days until development of rash
* *Symptoms*
  + Characteristic is striking erythema (redness) of the cheeks (slapped-face appearance) followed in 1-4 days by a lace-like rash on trunk and extremities which fades but may reappear.

**METHOD OF SPREAD:**

Contact with infection respiratory secretions.

**MINIMUM CONTROL MEASURES:**

* *Period of Communicability*
  + Greatest before onset of rash, probably not communicable after onset or rash.
* *Control*
  + Children with Fifth Disease DO NOT need to be excluded from school since they are not contagious once the rash occurs.
* *Concurrent Disinfection*
  + Routine hand washing and proper disposal of tissues used while sneezing, coughing and nose blowing are indicated to reduce the spread of Fifth Disease.

**HEAD INJURY**

A head injury is caused by a blow to the head and can have major or minor consequences.

If a major injury occurs resulting in possible skull fractures, loss of consciousness, disorientation or confusion, seizure activity, vomiting or severe visual disturbance, immediate emergency care is needed. Call your physician or ambulance (911).

A minor head injury is caused by a light blow to the head and usually results in no skull fracture, no brain damage and no loss of consciousness. Characteristically, a hematoma, “goose egg”, forms on the scalp. Treatment is ice to the injured area. Expect the area to be sore for a day or two.

**YOU SHOULD CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN OR SEEK EMERGENCY ROOM EVALUATION IF ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING DEVELOP:**

1. Severe headache.
2. Nausea and/or vomiting.
3. Double vision, blurred vision or pupils of different sizes.
4. Loss of muscle coordination such as falling down, walking strangely or staggering.
5. Any unusual behavior such as being confused, breathing irregular or dizziness.
6. Seizure (convulsion).
7. Bleeding or discharge from ear.

**IMPETIGO**

Impetigo is a contagious skin infection that is characterized by a yellow and red scab that covers each sore.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Consult your physician.
2. Cut the fingernails short and wash hands frequently.
3. Soften the crusts with warm water first then wash with an antiseptic soap (e.g., Dial) between applications of the prescribed medication.
4. Keep wash cloths or towels separate from those of other family members. Wash towels, wash cloths and bed linens in hot water with a little bleach.

Your child may return to school when he/she has seen a physician and has been under treatment for 24 hours and the scabs are no longer weeping.

**LICE (HEAD)**

Head lice are insects that can infest hair. Lice can be easily transferred from person to person by direct contact through personal items such as combs, towels, hats and hair ornaments.

It is hard to see lice, but you can recognize these signs:

1. Persistent itching of the scalp.
2. Nits or small silvery eggs attached to the hair. Nits are most often found at the back of the head or behind the ears.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Use special shampoos (R.I.D., Nix or others) which are available from a pharmacy and follow the directions on the label. It is suggested that all family members use the shampoo.
2. Wash all infested towels and bed linens. All clothes should be dry cleaned or washed in hot, soapy water and ironed, especially the seams.
3. Carefully vacuum sofas, carpets, mattresses and other furniture.
4. If there are stuffed animals that can’t be washed, they can be placed in a plastic bag, closed and stored away for one month to kill anything that might be in the toys.
5. Wash combs and brushes with special shampoo and keep them separate from those of other family members.
6. A solution of vinegar and water may also be put on the hair and then combed with a special comb to remove all the nits.
7. Check all family members.

Your child may return to school when he/she has been treated with the special shampoo. The school must have proof of treatment. The box top or label from the shampoo must be sent with your child upon his/her return to school.

**LYME DISEASE**

This is a multi-system disease transmitted by the bite of an infected tick and affects the skin, nervous system, joints and primarily, the heart.

Rheumatologists say symptoms vary but often occur in the following three stages:

1. Flu-like symptoms arise 3-30 days after bite. Headache, neck stiffness and extreme fatigue are common. About half of all victims develop a bull’s eye rash (a circle of redness 1 ½ to 8 inches across surrounding a relatively clear central area). The rash usually first appears at the bite site, but new bull’s eye lesions may appear elsewhere.
2. If untreated, the disease may spread. Facial paralysis (Bell’s Palsy) is one sign of stage two infections.
3. Arthritis may develop in one or more joints with pain, swelling and stiffness. Lyme disease in children is often mistaken for juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

Follow these precautions when sending a child outdoors especially in an area where Lyme disease has been reported.

* Tuck your child’s pants into socks, shoes or boots and tuck shirts into pants when going into a wooded area.
* Dress the child in light-colored, tight woven fabrics. Ticks are easier to see on light-colored cloth and tight weaves make it difficult for ticks to latch on.
* Use tick repellents on your child’s clothes and shoes rather than on bare skin. They are safer, more effective and longer lasting when used this way. Repellents with permethrin kill ticks on contact. Those that contain DEET (diethyltoluamide) repel but, do not kill ticks.
* Check your child’s clothing and body for ticks every day and remember to look on the scalp.
* Shampoo pets throughout the spring and summer with anti-tick soap to limit their chances of bringing ticks into the house.

**MONONUCLEOSIS**

**INCUBATION AND SYMPTOMS:**

Infectious agent:

Epstein-Bar Virus

Incubation:

4-6 Weeks

Symptoms:

Fever, sore throat, swollen lymph glands

**METHOD OF SPREAD:**

Direct contact with saliva of infected person.

**MINIMUM CONTROL MEASURES:**

1. Use of hygienic measures especially thorough hand washing.
2. Contact the school nurse to let know your child has ”mono.”
3. Students may return to school when well enough to resume normal activities.

**RINGWORM**

This is a fungus infection of the skin.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Consult your physician
2. Separate all clothing from other family members and wash it separately
3. Keep combs, brushes etc., separate
4. Wash all items in hot soapy water with a little bleach

Your child may return to school when he/she has been seen by a physician and has been under treatment for 24 hours with medication.

**SCABIES**

Scabies is a contagious condition caused by a tiny mite (insect) that burrows under the skin. Since mites live under the skin, contagion results after prolonged contact such as children sleeping in the same bed or two children wrestling. Itching and skin irritation will occur at the site of the mite.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Contact your physician for a prescription and follow the physician’s directions for use.
2. Wash all infected clothing, towels, wash cloths and bed linens.
3. Keep all personal items separate from those of the other family members and was thoroughly in hot water.
4. Wash hands frequently – trim nails.

Your child may return to school when he/she has been treated with a prescription cream or lotion from the physician and has been under treatment for 24 hours.

**STREP INFECTION**

Early diagnosis and medical treatment of strep throat are essential for the prevention of serious complications.

**INCUBATION & SYMPTOMS:**

* *Infections Agent*
  + Streptococcus bacteria
* *Incubation*
  + Short, usually 1-3 days, rarely longer
* *Symptoms*
  + Strep Throat – Fever, sore and inflamed throat, pus spots on the back of the throat, tender and swollen glands of the neck.
  + Scarlet Fever – All symptoms that occur with strep throat as well as a strawberry tongue and body rash. High fever, nausea and vomiting may occur.

**METHOD OF SPREAD:**

Direct or intimate contact with infected person or carrier, rarely by casual contact through transfer by objects or hands.

**MINIMUM CONTROL MEASURES:**

* *Period of Communicability*
  + With adequate treatment, communicability is eliminated with 24 hours.
* *Control*
  + Exclude from school until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment started.

**VOMITING**

Vomiting usually lasts from 12-24 hours. Medicine is usually not necessary for this condition.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE:**

1. Rest the stomach by giving nothing to eat or drink until the vomiting has stopped for at least four hours.
2. When the vomiting has stopped, give small amounts (about one tablespoon every half hour) of clear liquids such as Kool Aid, Jell-O, Popsicle, flat cola or cracked ice for several hours.
3. Avoid mil products, citrus juices and spicy or fried foods.
4. Gradually add plain solid foods such as crackers, pretzels, plain noodles or rice.
5. Call the physician if vomiting continues, if severe stomach pains develop and If fever is present.

Your child may return to school 24 hours after vomiting has stopped. Proper hand washing is essential to good care.

**REMINDER TO PARENTS**

Please do not send your child to school if he/she has any of the following problems:

1. Vomiting
2. Diarrhea
3. Temperature over 100 °F
4. A suspected contagious condition
5. A rash of undetermined origin
6. A cold or cough which would prevent full classroom participation
7. Sleepiness or drowsiness which would prevent full classroom participation

**MEDICATION POLICY**

**PURPOSE:**

The Gateway Board of School Directors recognizes that when student’s health needs make it necessary for medication to be taken during school hours, sound medical practices and state law require that certain procedures must be followed:

**AUTHORITY:**

Only essential prescribed medicines will be given at school. The parent/guardian will assume full responsibility for any medication sent to the school. Preplanning will permit most medications to be administered at home. Medications must be administered by a licensed nurse; however, the administration of over-the-counter medications is governed by state law which forbids a nurse to administer any medication without a physician’s or dentist’s written order.

**GUIDELINES:**

*ALL MEDICATIONS:*

1. A Gateway School District Medication Permission Form must accompany each medication, signed by both a parent/guardian and a physician/dentist.
2. Prescriptions must be packaged according to current pharmacy standards and in properly labeled pharmacy containers.
3. Over-the-counter medications must be in the manufacturer’s original container and be labeled by the parent/guardian with the child’s name, dosage to be taken and the time to be taken.
4. All medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse’s office.
5. Medications which are not in compliance with the above policy cannot be given and will be returned to the parent/guardian.
6. Self-administration of emergency asthma and anaphylaxis medications will be permitted with a physician’s order, including a statement that it is necessary for the student to carry the medication and that the student is capable of self-administration at school and school-related functions.

You can obtain medicine permission forms from the school nurse or on Gateway’s website (GatewayK12.org).

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**IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Emergency **911**

Family Physician \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Poison Control (Pittsburgh) 24-Hour Emergency **1-800-222-1222**

Police Department \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

NURSES’ OFFICES:

Cleveland Steward Elementary School 412-373-5876

Evergreen Elementary School 412-373-5846

Ramsey Elementary School 412-373-5861

University Park Elementary School 724-327-4117

Moss Side Middle School (grades 5 & 6) 412-373-5840

Gateway Middle School (grades 7 & 8) 412-373-5792

Gateway Senior High (grades 9 through 12) 412-373-5770

**NOTES**