

Hello Everyone!

I am sure we could all agree that these past few weeks have taxing times for our immune systems!! We have encountered a little bit of everything from upper respiratory infections to rashes to gastric issues!

Of course this leads us to the question of which children should be sent home and which children should remain in school. While each child must be assessed on an individual basis and from a holistic perspective, the FNESU Schools, the VT Department of Health and the local Pediatrician's Offices follow certain guidelines set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics when it comes to school exclusion criteria. Those guidelines state that:

**The following common conditions DO NOT require exclusion from school:**

- Common colds, runny noses (regardless of color of discharge), coughs
- Yellow, white, or watery eye discharge, eye pain or eyelid redness
- Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
- Rash without fever (including Hand, Foot & Mouth) and without behavioral changes

But, we all wonder, won't this simply encourage the spread of infectious illnesses to other people? The logic behind this (per the American Academy of Pediatrics) is that exclusion will not reduce disease transmission because some children may shed a virus/bacteria without becoming recognizably ill and other children who become ill may continue to shed the virus/bacteria for weeks. Thus, we never really know where someone could be in the infection cycle AND not all who are exposed to an illness will necessarily get sick!

**So what can we do to try to stay healthy?**

- HANDWASHING, HANDWASHING, HANDWASHING!!
- Hydrate with non-caffeinated, non-sugary beverages (water is the best!!)
- Diet choices- fruits and vegetables, whole grains, unprocessed foods
- Sufficient sleep- this helps our immune system stay strong!

At the end of the day, managing illness is not a perfect science and no set of rules can replace the need for common sense and an individualized assessment. I hope we can all continue to work together to sensibly manage the needs of our students and to keep everyone as healthy as possible!!

Happy Thanksgiving!

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