

Caring for sick children

It is not always practical to care for a sick child and you will need to make a professional judgement about whether or not you are prepared to do so. You will need to make it clear to parents that it is your decision, and that you need to consider the other children in your care as well as yourself and your family. In Wales, Standard 9: Health Care specifies that “no child is received if he/she appears to be ill”.

If a child has a notifiable infectious disease, you should not care for them because of the risk of infecting yourself, your family and the other children you care for. If you have an outbreak of an infectious disease, you must notify Ofsted or CSSIW immediately. Your Public Health Authority will be able to provide you with an up-to-date list of these, but the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988 list the following:

Acute encephalitis	Ophthalmia neonatorum
Acute poliomyelitis	Paratyphoid fever
Anthrax	Plague
Cholera	Rabies
Diphtheria	Relapsing fever
Dysentery	Rubella
Food poisoning	Scarlet fever
Leptospirosis	Smallpox
Malaria	Tetanus
Measles	Tuberculosis
Meningitis	Typhoid fever
<i>meningococcal</i>	Typhus fever
<i>pneumococcal</i>	Viral haemorrhagic fever
<i>haemophilus influenzae</i>	Viral hepatitis
<i>viral</i>	<i>Hepatitis A</i>
<i>other specified</i>	<i>Hepatitis B</i>
<i>unspecified</i>	<i>Hepatitis C</i>
Meningococcal septicaemia (without meningitis)	<i>other</i>
Mumps	Whooping cough
	Yellow fever

Even when a child does not have an infectious disease, there could be hygiene concerns for other children in your care. In Wales you must tell the other parents if a child you care for has an infectious disease.

It is a good idea to encourage parents to tell you of any symptoms of sickness that a child has shown in the 24 hours before they come to you. It should also be made clear at the start of the arrangement that, if a child becomes ill while in your care, the parent will be contacted and asked to take the child home. Emphasise that it is in everyone’s interests to do this as the earlier sick children are taken home, the less chance each other child has of becoming ill as a result of a child’s sickness.

If there is an infectious disease in your own family, you should not be childminding. Try to inform parents as soon as possible to allow them to make other childcare arrangements. Under these circumstances, no fee should be charged because the parents will have to find alternative care.