Scoil Cheile Chriost Rathmore NS

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

**Conjunctivitis – what is it?**Conjunctivitis is an infection of the conjunctiva, i.e. the transparent covering of the eye and lining of the eye lids. With this infection the conjunctiva become pink and the eyes develop a discharge which makes them sticky and matted, particularly first thing in the morning. Older children may complain that their eyes are uncomfortable, gritty or even painful.

**Conjunctivitis – what causes it?**Many different germs including viruses and bacteria can cause conjunctivitis. There are also many non infectious causes of conjunctivitis, such as allergy.

**Conjunctivitis – who gets it?**Anyone can.

**Conjunctivitis – how is it passed?**Children with sticky irritated eyes rub them frequently, contaminating their hands with infectious secretations. From there it is readily spread among other children and even to the adults.

**Conjunctivitis – how is it diagnosed?**Conjunctivitis is diagnosed by looking at the eyes, however it can be impossible to tell by looking whether it is caused by bacteria or by a virus. To do this a swab is taken and examined for the presence of bacteria.

**Conjunctivitis – how is it treated?**While most cases of viral conjuncivitis need no specific treatment, antibiotic drops are used to treat bacterial conjunctivitis. In all cases, the eyes should be kept clean and free of discharge as this will decrease the likelihood of spread.

**Conjunctivitis – should children be excluded?**Children with conjunctivitis with a pussy discharge should be excluded until they have been evaluated by a doctor and deemed fit for re-admission. (Cases of bacterial conjunctivitis might be expected to be on treatment as this will shorten the duration of symptoms and decrease the likelihood of spread of infection).

**Conjunctivitis - when can children return?**Once they have been evaluated by their doctor and treatment (if necessary) has commenced.

**Conjunctivitis – how to stop spread.**1. Exclude children pending evaluation by their doctor and institution of treatment if necessary.

2. Careful handwashing after wiping or touching eyes or any other infectious secretions.

3. Remind children to wash their hands after touching their eyes.