

HD or School Letter Head

DATE

Dear parents/guardians,

This letter is to notify you that a possible case of chickenpox (also called varicella) has been reported in a child attending **SCHOOL** and that your child may have been exposed. Chickenpox is a very contagious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever lasting an average of 4 to 6 days. Most children recover without any problems.

Chickenpox is spread from person to person through the air from an infected person's coughing or sneezing or by direct contact with the blisters. A person with chickenpox can spread the disease one to two days before they get the rash until all of their blisters have formed scabs. It takes from 10 to 21 days after exposure to a person with chickenpox for a person to develop chickenpox.

Most children now are vaccinated with at least one dose of chickenpox vaccine. Occasionally, vaccinated people will develop the disease; however it is usually a much milder form with a shorter duration of illness and fewer than 50 lesions.

What should you do? The **NAME** County Health Department strongly encourages you to make sure your child is up-to-date on his varicella vaccine: one dose is recommended for preschool-age children (12 months – 3 years) and two doses for school-age children. If your child is not up-to-date, please call your child's pediatrician or your local health department to get your child vaccinated as soon as possible.

If your child develops any symptoms of chickenpox, contact your child's pediatrician or local health department to discuss his care. Please call ahead if you are planning to visit any type of healthcare facility. If your child is diagnosed with chickenpox, you should notify the school nurse of the diagnosis. Do not allow your child to attend school, day care, work, parties and/or other gatherings until all of the blisters become crusted (about 4-6 days after rash appears) or until no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period.

If you or anyone else in your household has a weakened immune system or is pregnant and has never had chickenpox or the vaccine, talk with your doctor immediately.

For more information, please contact the **NAME** County Health Department at **PHONE**.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE