



Our Future, Our Commitment, Our Students

November 30, 2007

Dear Parents,

This letter is to inform you of a recent outbreak of chickenpox (varicella) at your child's school. An outbreak is defined as two or more cases of the disease. Chickenpox is one of the most contagious of all diseases. This disease is spread from person to person through coughing, sneezing, contact with the fluid from the blisters, or just being near someone who is contagious. The incubation period is from 2-3 weeks. Symptoms include a fever and development of red spots that become larger, fluid-filled blisters that begin on the chest or back and spread to other extremities, i.e., face, scalp, arms, and legs. The contagious period is usually 1-2 days before the onset of the rash and continues until all blisters are crusted over in about five days.

There is a vaccine for chickenpox and both the Centers for Disease Control and the Franklin County Health Department recommend that your child have this vaccine. Despite having had the vaccine, it is still possible that children can experience a mild case of the disease. Even if your child has had a previous vaccine, it is recommended that your child have a second vaccine. It is also recommended that you have your child vaccinated immediately if they have never had the vaccine or disease. The vaccine improves the individual's protection against chickenpox and reduces the impact of outbreaks in our schools. If the vaccine is administered within 3-5 days following exposure, the vaccine may prevent or significantly reduce the severity of the illness. Those students in Kindergarten who have been required by state law to receive the vaccine will not be allowed to attend school if they have no proof of vaccination. This includes students with religious and medical exemptions. Other students in upper grades with medical or religious exemptions are cautioned about the risks of contracting chickenpox in school. It is important also to alert pregnant women and infants about the risk of exposure. If you are pregnant and have been exposed to anyone with chickenpox, contact your physician immediately.

If your child has chickenpox, Franklin County Schools' policy says that the student must stay home for at least five days after blisters appear or until blisters become dry. We would appreciate your cooperation in complying with our recommendations and school policy to help reduce the spread of this disease. For more information, contact the FCS school nurse at 496-2600 or the Franklin County Health Department at 496-2533.

Sincerely,

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Director of Student Services

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Executive Director of Student Support Services

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