

## Chickenpox Outbreak Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent,

This letter is to inform you that an outbreak of chickenpox has occurred in your child's school. Because of your child's possible exposure, the health department recommends that you watch your child for the signs and symptoms of the disease. More information about chickenpox is on the attached fact sheet.

If you suspect your child is ill with chickenpox, please inform the school and keep your child home. Your child should remain out of school until all of the chickenpox lesions have crusted over (usually about five days). Chickenpox is usually a mild disease, but has the potential to cause severe complications in certain high-risk individuals including immunocompromised children, susceptible pregnant females, and premature infants of less than 28 weeks gestation.

The best way to prevent your child from catching chickenpox is through vaccination. A vaccine is available and is 80%-85% effective against infection and more than 95% effective against severe disease. Some vaccinated children can develop a mild chickenpox infection, called breakthrough disease. Recently, a booster dose of vaccine has been recommended to increase immunity and prevent breakthrough infection. It is strongly recommended that every child receive a second dose of chickenpox vaccine even if they have not been exposed to a child with chickenpox. Your private doctor or the local health department should be able to provide your child with a second dose of vaccine.

If you have any questions, please call \_\_\_\_\_

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or you may contact the Southwest Public Health Department.

Sincerely,

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