



Metro North
Hospital and Health Service

10 July 2017

Dear Parents and Staff,

The Metro North Public Health Unit provided recommendations on the 20 June 2017 regarding cases of rash illness occurring at the Wilston State School. Metro North Public Health Unit has since been notified of further cases of rash illness at the Wilston State School occurring over the school holiday period.

To avoid further spread of illness within the school, any child or staff developing an illness including rash or blisters:

- Should be excluded from the school until blisters have completely dried or crusted over or rash has resolved
- Should seek further medical advice and appropriate testing

If the medical diagnosis is chicken pox, further advice is as follows:

- Refer to the fact sheet
- Children with chickenpox must be excluded from school for at least 5 days from the onset of their illness and until all the blisters have dried up
- **Staff or school community members who are pregnant (or suspect they may be pregnant), or have a weakened immune system, or whose newborn baby has had contact with chickenpox, are recommended to take this letter to their GP or obstetrician for advice.** Varicella zoster immunoglobulin (antibodies) may be considered for contacts at high risk of complications because of pregnancy or other medical conditions.
- The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine provides the best protection against chickenpox and is offered to all children on the National Immunisation Program at 18 months as part of the measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine. The vaccine has been shown to be effective in preventing chickenpox infection following exposure in several studies. This is usually successful when given within 3 days and up to 5 days after exposure. Those in contact with a person with chickenpox who have not been vaccinated and who have not previously had confirmed chickenpox illness are advised to discuss this with their GP.
- A Queensland Health fact sheet about varicella zoster virus (chickenpox) is enclosed for your information. Another possible cause of rash illness is hand, foot and mouth disease and a Queensland Health factsheet about this illness is also enclosed for your information.

If you have any further queries, please seek medical advice or contact the Metro North Public Health Unit on (07) 3624 1111 during usual business hours.

Kind regards,

Dr James Smith
Public Health Physician
Metro North Public Health Unit