



ANN LETORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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A Better Community...One Student at a Time

Carly McPherson

Dear Parent/Guardian:

[A child/children] at our school [has/have] contracted chickenpox (varicella) and your child may have been exposed. Because the virus that causes chickenpox spreads easily, exposed children who have never had the vaccine or the disease will most likely get the disease. Although chickenpox is not usually a serious illness, it can cause severe complications such as pneumonia and can even result in death. Even a relatively mild illness can result in the loss of a week or more of class time for a child.

Children are considered to be immune to chickenpox if they:

- have had two doses of varicella vaccine, with the first dose administered at 12 months of age or older; or
- have laboratory evidence of immunity to varicella; or
- have documentation of a history of varicella or herpes zoster disease diagnosed by a physician.

Although a child's reported history of chickenpox disease from a parent or guardian is acceptable for school entry, when there is even a single chickenpox or shingles case in a school, a parental statement of history of disease is not sufficient.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health recommends children who are not immune to chickenpox and have been posed, which is defined as four hours in the vicinity of an infected person, be kept out of school beginning on day 8 after their first exposure to a case of varicella until day 21 after the onset of the last case in the school. If your child is vaccinated with the varicella vaccine within 5 days of their earliest exposure, he/she may return. It is important to note that transmission of chickenpox may occur from contact lasting less than 4 hours.

If your child is **4 through 12 years of age** and has not had a chickenpox vaccine, it is recommended he/she be kept out of school beginning on day 8 after his/her first exposure to a case of varicella until day 21 after the onset of the last case in the school. If your child is vaccinated with the varicella vaccine within 5 days of his/her earliest exposure, he/she may return. If your child has had one dose of varicella vaccine, it is recommended he/she be kept out of school beginning on day 8 after his/her first exposure to a case of varicella until day 21 after the onset of the last case in the school or until he/she receives the second dose of varicella vaccine. The second dose of varicella vaccine can be given as long as it has been at least **12 weeks from the first dose**.

If your child is **13 years of age or older**, and has not had a chickenpox vaccine, it is recommended he/she be kept out of school beginning on day 8 after his/her first exposure to a case of varicella until day 21 after the onset of the last case in the school. If your child is vaccinated with the varicella vaccine within 5 days of his/her earliest exposure, he/she may return. If your child has had one dose of varicella vaccine, it is recommended he/she be kept out of school beginning on day 8 after his/her first exposure to a Case of varicella until day 21 after the onset of the last case in the school or until he/she receives the second dose of varicella vaccine. The second dose of vaccine can be given as long as it has been at least **28 days from the first dose**.

Studies have shown that children who have been exposed to chickenpox and are vaccinated within 5 days of exposure are less likely to contract the disease. Please contact your child's healthcare provider to make arrangements to get your child vaccinated.

If your child is immunocompromised, (i.e. mv, cancer, leukemia, organ transplant, etc.) contact your child's physician immediately to report the exposure, ask for guidance for returning to school and request a written statement for the school nurse.

If your child develops chickenpox, regardless if he/she has received the varicella vaccine, he/she should be kept from attending school five days after onset of rash and/or until the rash has scabbed over, whichever is longer.

Please help us to protect your child and stop the spread of chickenpox in our school. If you have any questions regarding this notification letter, please contact us at 717-872-9530.

Sincerely,

Carly McPherson
Principal
Ann LeTort Elementary School