



February 5, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that your child's school, Assumption Academy, is currently experiencing an outbreak of an illness that is accompanied by a blister-like rash suspected to be chickenpox. Chickenpox is a highly contagious disease that is caused by a virus (Varicella zoster). It is easily spread by touching or breathing in virus particles that come from the chickenpox blisters or an infected person's mouth or nose.

The Northern Kentucky Health Department advises that you take the following actions:

1. **Ensure all members of your household are up-to-date on all vaccinations.** The chickenpox vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of the virus. It is very safe and prevents almost all cases of severe illness. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. Contact your healthcare provider or the Health Department with any questions about where to get the vaccine.

Everyone can be susceptible to chickenpox. However, if a vaccinated person gets chickenpox, the symptoms are usually milder and may be shorter in duration. Some people are at a higher risk for severe illness and serious complications. This includes infants (less than 1 year old), unvaccinated children, adolescents (older than 12 years old), adults, pregnant women, and immunocompromised persons.

2. **Monitor your child for symptoms of chicken pox.** Symptoms include a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever that can last 5-7 days. The rash appears first on the chest, back, and face, and then spreads over the entire body. Be aware that they may not show symptoms or become ill for 10-21 days after they were exposed to chicken pox.
3. **If your child experiences any of the symptoms of chickenpox:**
 - Keep them away from other people as much as possible.
 - Call your doctor and schedule an appointment immediately. Make sure the doctor performs "confirmatory" testing if it is believed to be chickenpox and ask about antiviral treatment.
4. **If your child is diagnosed with chickenpox:**
 - Ask the doctor for a note to give to the school that states your child has chickenpox.
 - Notify the school of your child's diagnosis. School officials will require that you keep your child at home for the next 7 days, until they are no longer able to spread the virus.
 - Ensure other people that the child has been around monitor for symptoms.
5. **If any other member of your household experiences symptoms of chickenpox:**
 - Keep them away from other people both in and outside of the household as much as possible.
 - Ensure they contact their doctor immediately for testing and treatment. They may want to ask about antiviral treatment.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Health Department at (859) 363-2070.



February 21, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian of Students at Assumption Academy:

This letter is to follow-up from a previous letter sent on February 5, 2019. Your child's school, Assumption Academy, is still experiencing an outbreak of this illness that is accompanied by a blister-like rash suspected to be chickenpox. Chickenpox can be a very serious illness for many in your community. Chickenpox is especially dangerous for anyone that is immunocompromised or pregnant. Complications from chickenpox can include many secondary infections such as bacterial infections, pneumonia, encephalitis, Reye syndrome, sepsis and even death.

Chickenpox spreads easily, mainly when a person touches or breathes in the virus that comes from chickenpox blisters. It can also spread through tiny droplets that get into the air when someone who has chickenpox breathes or talks, for example.

Due to the possibility of severe complications and death, even in healthy children, chickenpox parties are not recommended. There is no way to tell in advance how your child will react to chickenpox and how severe their symptoms will be. It is not worth taking the chance of exposing your child to this disease.

As a result of this outbreak, all school events are being cancelled until 21 days after the onset of rash for the last ill student. These events would include any instance where students from your school are going into other schools/public areas or the public/other schools are coming to your school. Events include but are not limited to sporting events (including both home and away games), fairs, festivals, music events, etc.

The Northern Kentucky Health Department advises that you take the following actions:

Monitor your child for symptoms of chickenpox. Symptoms include a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever that can last 5-7 days. The rash appears first on the chest, back, and face, and then spreads over the entire body. Be aware that they may not show symptoms or become ill for 10-21 days after they were exposed to chickenpox.

Be sure to let your doctor know if other symptoms start occurring such as the rash spreads to one or both eyes or gets very red, warm or tender, or the rash is accompanied by dizziness, disorientation, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, tremors, loss of muscle coordination, worsening cough, vomiting, stiff neck or a fever higher than 102 degrees.

Northern Kentucky Health Department

8001 Veterans Memorial Drive, Florence, KY 41042 | 859-341-4264 | www.nkyhealth.org

If your child experiences any of the symptoms of chickenpox:

- Keep them away from other people until all blisters have dried into scabs (usually 6 days after rash onset, but can vary).
- Call your doctor and schedule an appointment immediately. Make sure the doctor performs “confirmatory” testing if it is believed to be chickenpox and ask about antiviral treatment.

If your child is diagnosed with chickenpox:

- Ask the doctor for a note to give to the school that states your child has chickenpox.
- Notify the school of your child’s diagnosis. School officials will require that you keep your child at home for the next 7 days, until they are no longer able to spread the virus.
- Ensure other people that the child has been around monitor for symptoms and to get vaccinated if they have not been vaccinated.

If any other member of your household experiences symptoms of chickenpox:

- Keep them away from other people both in and outside of the household until all blisters have dried into scabs (usually 6 days after rash onset, but can vary).
- Ensure they contact their doctor immediately for testing and treatment. They may want to ask about antiviral treatment.

Ensure all members of your household are up-to-date on all vaccinations. The chickenpox vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of the virus. It is very safe and prevents almost all cases of severe illness. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. Contact your health care provider or the Health Department with any questions about where to get the vaccine.

Everyone can be susceptible to chickenpox. However, if a vaccinated person gets chickenpox, the symptoms are usually milder and may be shorter in duration. Some people are at a higher risk for severe illness and serious complications. This includes infants (less than 1 year old), unvaccinated children, adolescents (older than 12 years old), adults, pregnant women and immunocompromised persons.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Health Department at 859-363-2070.



March 14, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to follow-up from previous letters sent on February 5 and 21, 2019. Your child's school, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Academy/Assumption Academy, Grades K-12, is still experiencing an outbreak of an illness characterized by a blister-like rash presumed to be chickenpox (varicella) based on a clinical diagnosis received through Cincinnati Children's Hospital on 02/19/19. There has been a concerning increase in the number of infected students at Assumption Academy over the past three weeks. Since February 24th, 2019, there has been a 68% increase (from 19 to 32) in the number of varicella cases. 13% of the total student body has been affected by this outbreak.

Chickenpox can be a very serious illness for many in your community. Chickenpox spreads easily, mainly when a person touches or breathes in the virus that comes from chickenpox blisters. It can also spread through tiny droplets that get into the air when someone who has chickenpox breathes or talks, for example.

Chickenpox is especially dangerous for infants and anyone that is immunocompromised or pregnant. Complications from chickenpox can include many secondary infections such as bacterial infections, pneumonia, encephalitis, Reye's syndrome, sepsis and even death. Do not use aspirin or aspirin-containing products to relieve fever from chickenpox. The use of aspirin in children with chickenpox has been associated with Reye's syndrome, a severe disease that affects the liver and brain and can cause death.

As a result of the continued increase in cases and to prevent further spread of this illness, beginning Friday, March 15, 2019, all students, Grades K-12, without proof of vaccination or proof of immunity against varicella virus will not be allowed to attend school until 21 days after the onset of rash for the last ill student or staff member. In order for your student to attend school, proof of either vaccination or immunity will need to be either on file or sent to the school. Acceptable proof of vaccination includes state certificate of immunization signed by a health care provider that indicates the two dose series of varicella vaccination has been received. Acceptable proof of immunity includes a notice from a healthcare provider that they have received laboratory evidence of immunity (IgM) or disease (IgG).

School events will continue to be cancelled until 21 days after the onset of rash for the last ill student or staff member. These events would include any instance where students from your school are going into other schools/public areas or the public/other schools are coming to your school. Events include but are not limited to sporting events (including both home and away games), fairs, festivals, music events, etc.

Assumption Academy personnel will communicate with you when students without proof of vaccination or immunity against chickenpox may return to school.

You will need to monitor your child for symptoms for the duration of the outbreak. At the same time, we urge minimizing contact with others outside the home, especially avoiding infants under 12 months, pregnant women and individuals known to be immunocompromised. More detailed instructions are on the next page.



The Northern Kentucky Health Department advises that you continue to take the following actions:

Monitor your child for symptoms of chickenpox . Symptoms include a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever that can last 5-7 days. The rash appears first on the chest, back, and face, and then spreads over the entire body. Be aware that they may not show symptoms or become ill for 10-21 days after they were exposed to chickenpox.

Be sure to let your doctor know if other symptoms start occurring such as the rash spreads to one or both eyes or gets very red, warm or tender, or the rash is accompanied by dizziness, disorientation, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, tremors, loss of muscle coordination, worsening cough, vomiting, stiff neck or a fever higher than 102 degrees.

If your child experiences any of the symptoms of chickenpox:

- Keep them away from other people until all blisters have dried into scabs (usually 6 days after rash onset, but can vary).
- Call your doctor and schedule an appointment immediately. Make sure the doctor performs “confirmatory” testing if it is believed to be chickenpox and ask about antiviral treatment.

If your child is diagnosed with chickenpox:

- Ask the doctor for a note to give to the school that states your child has chickenpox.
- Notify the school of your child’s diagnosis. School officials will require that you keep your child at home for the next 7 days, until they are no longer able to spread the virus.
- Ensure other people that the child has been around monitor for symptoms and to get vaccinated if they have not been vaccinated.

If any other member of your household experiences symptoms of chickenpox:

- Keep them away from other people both in and outside of the household until all blisters have dried into scabs (usually 6 days after rash onset, but can vary).
- Ensure they contact their doctor immediately for testing and treatment. They may want to ask about antiviral treatment.

Ensure all members of your household are up-to-date on all vaccinations. The chickenpox vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of the virus. It is very safe and prevents almost all cases of severe illness. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. Contact your health care provider or the Health Department with any questions about where to get the vaccine.

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Chickenpox parties are not recommended due to the possibility of severe complications and death, even in healthy children. There is no way to tell in advance how your child will react to chickenpox and how severe their symptoms will be. It is not worth taking the chance of exposing your child to this disease.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Health Department at 859-363-2070.