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Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Dear Parents, Carers & Staff,

### Re: Chickenpox at Busbridge CofE Junior School

We have recently been notified of a couple of cases of chickenpox and a case of impetigo in children attending our school. Following guidance from Public Health England (Surrey and Sussex) this letter is just to make you aware of the situation and give you advice from Public Health England about these conditions:

#### Chickenpox

Chickenpox is an acute generalised viral disease, which is highly infectious yet usually a mild disease. The main symptom of chickenpox is a rash in which groups of small, red, itchy and sometimes painful, fluid filled (blister-like) spots appear on many parts of the body. After a few days the spots burst or dry out and then crust over. In addition to the rash, a child may also have a slightly raised temperature, but in general does not appear very ill.

Chickenpox is transmitted directly by personal contact or droplet spread. Children are infectious from 1-2 days prior to the start of the rash and continue to be so until all lesions are crusted (usually about 5 days). **Children should therefore be kept away from school or nursery until 5 days after the onset of the rash or until all spots are crusted over if longer than 5 days.**

The virus can remain dormant in the body for many years and may reactivate later in life causing Shingles. If you have already had the infection, then you are immune and won't get it again. If you have not previously had it, the disease can rarely be much more serious notably in adults, particularly pregnant women, in infants and in any immunosuppressed individuals. If you or your child has an underlying condition which affects the immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

#### Complications

Very rarely, chickenpox in children can be complicated by a severe infection caused by a bacterium called invasive Group A streptococcus, which appears infecting the spots and surrounding area. Impetigo is often also caused by this bacterium. As we are aware of a case of impetigo within the school community, parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason, please seek medical assistance immediately.

Further information is available from NHS Choices - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/>

Yours faithfully

Richard Catchpole  
Headteacher

