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KAM/ELB/Year 1/Chickenpox

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Dear Year 1 Parents and Carers

Chickenpox at Westlands Primary School

We have been notified of several cases of chickenpox in children attending Year 1 of our school. This letter is just to make you aware of the situation.

Chickenpox is an acute generalised viral disease, which is highly infectious. It is usually a mild disease and the child makes a full recovery. 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. 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. If you are concerned you should consult with your GP.

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 any concerns, please consult your General Practitioner.

Further information is available from:

NHS Choices - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/>

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Mirams
Executive Headteacher