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Important Notice

May 11, 2013

Dear Norwin School District Parents or Guardians:

The Norwin School District has a duty to protect and safeguard the health and well-being of every child who attends our schools.

Based on reports of confirmed cases of chicken pox within the District, the District would like to provide this update to the school community.

The District has a number of medically fragile children, some with life-threatening illnesses, who although they may be immunized against the chicken pox virus, are still highly susceptible to illness from such viruses or other diseases. The District cannot risk the health and well-being of these children or any child, no matter how small the risk. The District believes that any parent will understand and affirm the District's position.

Children who have not been immunized not only put themselves at risk for contracting the chicken pox virus and other communicable diseases, but also may be carriers of the virus and might infect other Norwin students who are medically fragile.

Based on our concerns and obligations as noted above, the Norwin School District sought the advice of the Pennsylvania Department of Health regarding the most appropriate course of action to address this circumstance.

As such, the Norwin School District will follow the recommendations provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, which were subsequently confirmed in writing in a letter provided by the Department to the District on May 10, 2013, as follows:

1. Parents should be informed of the case and the possible exposure of their children to chickenpox.
2. All students and staff members who are not immune to chickenpox should be offered the chickenpox vaccine. Immunity to chickenpox is defined as
 - History of chickenpox disease after the first birthday
 - Receipt of two appropriately spaced doses of chickenpox vaccine, or
 - Serologic evidence of immunity to chickenpox.
3. All students and staff at high risk of severe chickenpox disease (immunocompromised and pregnant individuals) should be excluded from school and school activities from day eight after the FIRST exposure to a case of chickenpox through day 21 after their LAST exposure to a case of chickenpox.

Next Page, Please

"Moving Forward from Great to Extraordinary"

4. All non-immune close contacts of a case of chickenpox should be excluded from school and school activities from day eight after the FIRST exposure to a case of chickenpox through day 21 after their LAST exposure to a case of chickenpox or until they receive a dose of chickenpox vaccine.
5. In the event of an outbreak (defined as five or more cases in the school), all non-immune individuals in the school should be excluded until 21 days after the last day the most recent case was in the school.

Within the past year, the Department of Health has expanded and strengthened the recommendations for these types of circumstances.

It is the District's intention to clearly follow the recommendations of the Department. The School District is taking all appropriate action to address this situation, including the notification of parents and staff so that appropriate steps can be taken to protect children K-12 and the community. The District has convened administrative meetings and will convene faculty meetings to convey information and to ensure that proper actions are followed.

If your child has chicken pox, please report it to the school nurse. If you have any questions, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH, or contact your primary care physician.

Respectfully,

William H. Kerr, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C: Norwin School District Board of Education
Norwin Principals and Central Office Administrators
All Norwin Employees
Dr. Daniel Medic, Norwin School District Physician
Pennsylvania Department of Health, Harrisburg Office
Pennsylvania Department of Health, Greensburg Office
Central Westmoreland Career and Technology Center
Norwin Area Daycare Providers
Out-of-District Placement Facilities