



## Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Public Assistance & Work Support Strategies ~ Public Health ~ Social Work Services ~ Veterans Services

Stoney Blevins

Health and Human Services Director

October 29, 2018

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

We have just been informed that Asheville Waldorf School is having an outbreak of chickenpox (varicella). As of today, there have been over 5 students at the school who have been sick with chickenpox since September 14, 2018.

Please be aware that your child could get chickenpox if they have not been immunized against chickenpox or have not had chickenpox before. It is also possible for children who have been fully immunized against chickenpox or who have had chickenpox previously to get a milder case of chickenpox if they are exposed to chickenpox again. Please read the information about chickenpox on other side of this letter. **If your child has symptoms of chickenpox, keep them at home and call your child's healthcare provider for an appointment to check if they have chickenpox. If your child does have chickenpox, they must stay home until all of their sores have crusted over and the child feels better.**

Per guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the authority granted to the local health director by NC statute, **any student or staff without proof of immunity to chickenpox will be issued a quarantine order. This order keeps these students/staff from attending school and participating in activities outside their homes until 21 days after their last exposure to chickenpox.**

**Proof of immunity to chickenpox can be demonstrated in one of the following ways:**

- **Signed documentation from a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant) verifying that the student has a history of typical chickenpox illness**
- **Documentation of at least one dose of the varicella vaccine**
- **Blood test results that indicate the student has immunity to varicella** -- Blood tests can be arranged with your child's healthcare provider. It takes several days for results of these blood tests to return.

**If your child has not had the varicella vaccine and has not been ill with chickenpox before, we strongly encourage you to get them immunized as soon as possible.** The sooner the vaccine is administered after exposure, the more effective it is at preventing chickenpox or reducing the severity of the illness. The vaccine is safe and effective for children 12 months of age or older. It is safe for someone to get the vaccine if they have already been sick with chickenpox but have no documentation to prove it. Your child can return to school immediately after getting the vaccine.

**We strongly encourage all children to have two doses of the vaccine.** Although only children entering kindergarten or first grade after July 1, 2015 are required to have two doses of the varicella vaccine, getting two doses better protects your child and can help stop the outbreak.

Your child's healthcare provider or the Buncombe County Health and Human Services (BCHHS) can give your child the vaccine. If you have any questions, please contact your child's healthcare provider or BCHHS Communicable Disease staff at 828-250-5109, and tell them about this letter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Mullendore  
Medical Director

Jannine Shepard  
Health Director

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