<Print on Letterhead>
Chickenpox Alert
Important Notice to Parents
<Date>

A student at <Facility/School Name> has chickenpox, also known as varicella.

OR

There are <Number><children/students> attending <Facility/School Name> who have chickenpox, also known as varicella.

Chickenpox causes a skin rash of itchy, blister-like lesions all over the body. Often there is a fever before the rash. The illness lasts 5 to 10 days. Chickenpox is usually not serious; however, it may cause severe symptoms in some high-risk individuals such as infants, pregnant women who are not immune to chickenpox, persons who have weakened immune systems because of illness or medications, and persons with chronic skin or lung disorders.

Chickenpox is very contagious. It spreads easily from person to person through the air by coughing and sneezing or by direct contact with the fluid from a chickenpox lesion. It usually takes 14 to 16 days to develop chickenpox symptoms after being exposed to someone with chickenpox, but symptoms may appear 10 to 21 days after exposure.

Two doses of chickenpox vaccine (also known as varicella vaccine) are recommended for children 12 months of age or older who have not had chickenpox. The first dose is usually given at 12-15 months of age and the second dose given at 4 to 6 years of age. Varicella vaccination (or an exemption to vaccination) is required for children of certain ages or grade levels to attend school or childcare in Colorado.

Some persons who have received varicella vaccine may still get chickenpox, but it is usually milder. The rash is less severe (sometimes only a few red bumps that look like insect bites) and there may be no fever in vaccinated individuals with chickenpox.

Varicella vaccine given within three days of exposure to chickenpox, and possibly up to five days after exposure, may prevent chickenpox or reduce the severity of disease. <We recommend you contact your child’s health care provider as soon as possible to obtain varicella vaccine for your child if they have not had chickenpox disease or have not received 2 doses of varicella vaccine.> Please contact your local health department about vaccination if your child does not have a health care provider. <Your child may be excluded from school in the event of an outbreak if he/she is not immune to chickenpox.>

Adults having contact with <children/students> attending <Facility/School Name> who are not immune to chickenpox should consider receiving varicella vaccine.

If your child develops chickenpox, he/she should not attend childcare or school until the rash has crusted over. Please notify school/childcare personnel that your child has chickenpox. Please call <Contact Person> with <Agency/Facility/School Name> at <Phone Number> if you have any questions.

February 2013