Dear Parents/Carers,
We wish to notify you that we have had a student with a case of Chickenpox diagnosed on the weekend in one of our Year 6/7 classrooms. Below is information from the SA Health website regarding the symptoms and treatment of Chickenpox.

Kind Regards,
Judith Bowden—30/3/2015

Chickenpox and shingles - symptoms and treatment

Chickenpox (varicella) is a viral infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus. Shingles (herpes zoster infection) is caused by re-activation of the chicken-pox virus.

How chickenpox is spread
Chickenpox is spread when mucous membranes (the thin moist lining of many parts of the body such as the nose, mouth and throat) come into contact with the virus in airborne droplets produced by coughing or sneezing, or with fluid from the blisters.

Signs and symptoms for Chickenpox
Symptoms of chickenpox may include:
- Slight fever and cold-like symptoms, followed by a rash.
- A rash appears as blisters which crust to form scabs and is usually itchy.
- Crops of blisters may appear over several days and various stages of blisters may be present. The rash is usually more noticeable on the trunk than on the limbs. It may affect the scalp and the inside of the mouth, nose, and throat.
- In childhood, chickenpox is usually a mild illness and can be so mild it might not be noticed. Infection in adults is uncommon, since more than 95% of unimmunised Australians get the infection in childhood. Chickenpox in adults is more severe and may be complicated by pneumonia (lung infection or inflammation).

Chickenpox may be particularly severe in children with leukaemia, pregnant women and young babies. Congenital malformation of the fetus may occur in up to 2% of pregnancies where chickenpox occurs in early pregnancy. If chickenpox occurs around the time of delivery, the baby may become infected and up to 30% of newborns will become severely ill.

Diagnosis
Chickenpox and shingles have a typical appearance and are usually diagnosed by clinical presentation. A blood test can detect if someone has protection from chickenpox infection in the past, but the test may not be helpful in determining if there is adequate immunity to varicella-zoster virus following vaccination.

Incubation period
(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)
For chickenpox, 10 to 21 days, commonly 14 to 16 days, but may vary in people whose immune system is suppressed.

Infectious period
(time during which an infected person can infect others)
For chickenpox, from 2 days before the rash appears until at least 5 days after the rash

When to seek medical advice
Seek medical advice if there are any of the following:
- a child or adult with chickenpox has a high fever, cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain
- a pregnant woman has chickenpox
- a newborn baby (up to 1 month of age) is exposed to chickenpox
- a person over 50 years of age has shingles
chickenpox develops in a child or adult with an immune deficiency (including a history of leukaemia, even if in remission).

Prevention
Exclude people with chickenpox and shingles from childcare, preschool, school and work until all blisters have dried (usually about 5 days). Some remaining scabs are not a reason for continued exclusion.
Any person with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded from contact with a case of chickenpox or shingles for their own protection.

For more information visit the following website