



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Mary T. Bassett, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

May 11, 2016

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization

42-09 28th Street, CN21
Queens, NY 11101-4132

Dear Principal,

There is an outbreak of chickenpox (also known as varicella) in the Orthodox Jewish community of Williamsburg. Effective immediately, every student in your school who is not vaccinated with the required number of doses of varicella vaccine must be excluded from school in accordance with New York State Public Health Law §2164. Students cannot return until they are vaccinated, or until the outbreak is declared over, even if they have an approved religious or medical exemption to varicella immunization. As a reminder, for the 2015-2016 school-year, two doses of varicella vaccine are required for students in grades kindergarten, 1, 6 and 7. One dose of varicella vaccine is required for all other grades. Results of blood work showing immunity to varicella virus (varicella IgG positive) or documentation of disease history from a physician is also acceptable.

Principals or directors are responsible for enforcing compliance with all school-required immunizations. Alternative schedules and philosophic objections to vaccinations are not allowed. Principals who are not in compliance with Public Health Law §2164 are at risk for receiving Commissioner's Orders with a penalty of up to \$2,000 per violation. The full requirements are attached and available at www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/sch-med-req.pdf.

Please share the attached letter with all parents of students in your school so that they are aware of the chickenpox outbreak. The letter informs parents that students who do not have the required number of doses of varicella vaccination due to religious or medical exemptions or due to non-compliance will be excluded from school for the duration of this outbreak.

Students who are sick with chickenpox must stay home from school until all lesions have fully crusted over and no new lesions have appeared for a 24 hour period which is when they are no longer contagious.

Frequently asked questions about chickenpox and the varicella vaccine are available at nyc.gov/health (search "chickenpox") to help address questions that you, your staff or your students may have.

Your help ensuring that students are vaccinated and that proper outbreak control measures are taken is critical in preventing the spread of chickenpox. Please contact the Department of Health's Bureau of Immunization if you have questions about school immunization requirements or about chickenpox (347-396-2400). Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane R. Zucker".

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc