



NEWSLETTER

VOL: 40 No.12

SHELLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

21st May 2021



Principal's Report



One of the greatest delights in my job is bearing witness to the outstanding teaching and learning that occurs at Shelley PS. Each week I enjoy seeing samples of fabulous student work from across the Key Learning Areas. My favourite days at work are those when I have the most time to get out into classrooms and the playground to interact with the students and teachers. (Being a School Principal really is one of the best jobs around!) It is such a pleasure to see the pride and excitement on our student's faces as they talk about their learning. Well done to all of our students for their work so far this term.

Over the past 2 years, we have been using our school social media accounts to share some of the activities and work being done by our students here at Shelley PS every day. If you would like to access this information, I have provided the details about Instagram and Facebook below. The feedback from parents has been very positive, as it is a good way to stay connected with what has been happening at school. For those with children who tend not to be forthcoming about daily school events, it is a great means for parents to start conversations about activities they have seen on social media.

As we reach the end of Week 5 (already!) - the teachers are very busy with assessments and report writing. I thank our staff sincerely for their hard work and commitment. The strong reputation enjoyed by our school is due to our fabulous teaching staff, great students - and thanks to your support as parents.

It has been another busy fortnight at Shelley, since our last newsletter! Some important events and activities included the Year 1 excursion to Sydney Zoo, Walk Safely to School Day, Book Fair, the launch of our Shelley PS Dads Group through the Fathering Project and of course NAPLAN for our students in Years 3 and 5. Our youngest students also took part in their first excursion on Monday last week, with Kindergarten visiting Sydney Zoo. They had a wonderful day - and enjoyed linking their classroom learning

to some real life experience! Thank you to all the parents for having the students here on time ready to leave early - and especially to all the parent helpers who assisted on the day.



National Simultaneous Storytime

Many of our students in K-6 participated in **Simultaneous Storytime** on Wednesday this week. "National Simultaneous Storytime is an annual campaign that aims to encourage more young Australians to read and enjoy books. It is a colourful, vibrant, fun event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy, using an Australian children's book that explores age-appropriate themes, and addresses key learning areas of the National Curriculum for Kindergarten to Year 6".



This is our school's fifth year taking part in Simultaneous Storytime – and Shelley students joined thousands of other students across the country reading the selected book during literacy time on Wednesday 19th May. Every year a picture book, written and illustrated by an Australian author and illustrator is read simultaneously in libraries, schools, pre-schools, childcare centres, family homes, bookshops and many other places around the country.

2021's book was Give me some Space! written and illustrated Philip Bunting. This year's event was particularly special as an astronaut read the story from space to school children & families in an exciting new program that combines literature with science! ALIA along with Scholastic, the Australian Space Agency and the Office of the Chief Scientist brought us an intergalactic experience with the NSS 2021 book being read by the astronaut Dr Shannon Walker from the International Space Station. We would also like to thank Story Time From Space for this wonderful initiative and for making NSS 2021 out of this world.

Ban on Knives in Schools

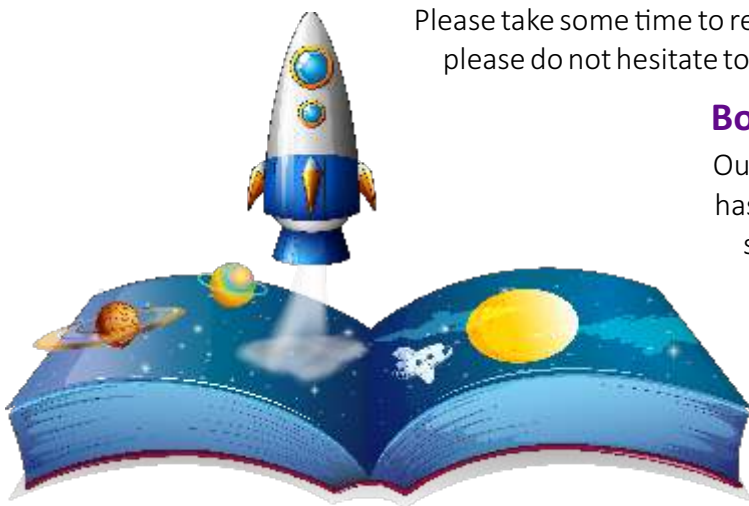
Following the recent serious incident at a metropolitan high school involving a knife carried for religious purposes, the Department of Education is currently working with community representatives and government agencies to discuss how best to support students meet the needs of their faith while adhering to school safety policies.

While the Department conducts those discussions, the Department has issued a temporary ban on students, staff and visitors carrying **any form of knife to government schools**. This temporary ban is to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff at all school sites.

This ban covers all forms of knife including kirpans, which are a short, curved blade, worn (sometimes in miniature form) as one of the distinguishing signs of the Sikh faith.

NSW now has the toughest knife laws in Australia. As a parent, you need to be aware of these laws, as you can also be charged if you allow your child to carry a knife. **No knives are allowed at school under any circumstances**. If a student has a knife at school the principal may call the police. The student may be expelled or suspended immediately. Possessing a knife includes your child simply having one in their bag.

I have included in this newsletter, 'No knives at school - parent factsheet'. Please take some time to read this. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Williams or myself.



Book Fair

Our first Book Fair for 2021 is in its final week. It has once again been very well supported by the school community. It is heartening to see so many parents and grandparents fuelling their child's love for reading by purchasing books, whilst also supporting the school. Thank you to Mrs Bradley for organising the Book Fair and to the school community for your involvement.

Work around our School

The school has been a hive of activity this week - and not just in the classrooms, but out on school grounds as well!

Construction of the Kiss and Drop area on Hadrian Ave has commenced and will continue for the next few months. Please be aware, that on occasion there will be disruptions to traffic on Hadrian Ave, with road closures and detours in place. Please be mindful when these delays are in place and plan for drop off and pickup accordingly, allowing additional time! Families are encouraged to use Pelleas Street or Blacktown Road as an alternative during the detours.

Over the next 5 weeks, we will also be having the roofs on two of our buildings replaced. This may result in some minor disruptions to classes, as they may need to relocate for short periods for safety and noise reasons. We are fortunate to have a number of spare spaces within the school, to accommodate these changes.



Social Media: Instagram and Facebook

In order to help our parents stay in touch with what is happening at Shelley, we utilise introduced social media. We have a Facebook page, as well an Instagram account, which is used to acknowledge the amazing work done by students and teachers of Shelley and to showcase the many events and activities that take place here every week. (Please note: the social media accounts are a secondary form of communication – and should not be relied upon for reminders about upcoming events etc. We encourage all families to access the newsletter and Skoolbag app, as the core communication tools. Please do not send questions through Facebook – it is much better to phone the office or email the school, if you have a question, as you will receive a much quicker response).

Of course, both social media platforms are closely monitored and managed. The Facebook page is for use by parents (none of our students should have Facebook accounts anyhow, as they are under 13 years of age).

We hope parents will find these platforms to be a helpful and enjoyable way to stay in touch with what is happening in their children's school.

The OFFICIAL Shelley PS social media accounts can be found by searching for:



Facebook:
Shelley PS



Instagram:
shelley.ps

Parent Concerns or Questions

If you have a concern or query about your child's learning or any aspect of school life, the staff at Shelley PS encourages all parents to let us know.

The first “port of call” should always be the class teacher as they will have the best knowledge of your child's learning. If you would like to make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher please send a note or contact the office.



The Assistant Principals are your “second port of call” should you have a concern or query that has not been resolved - or a more general question about school organisation and procedures.

The Assistant Principal for the relevant stage can also be contacted for a meeting. They are:

Early Stage 1 - Kindergarten - Mrs Jassal (Relieving)

Stage 1 - Years 1 and 2 - Miss Sultana (Relieving)

Stage 2 - Years 3 and 4 - Miss Liyanage (Relieving)

Stage 3 - Years 5 and 6 - Mrs Bradley

Chicken Pox

There are a number of childhood illnesses which we frequently remind parents about in newsletters, as when they are present in schools they can be highly contagious.

I have included some information about Chicken Pox as we have had a confirmed case of chicken pox reported to us this week. Please take a few moments to read the information (which is taken from the NSW Department of Health website).

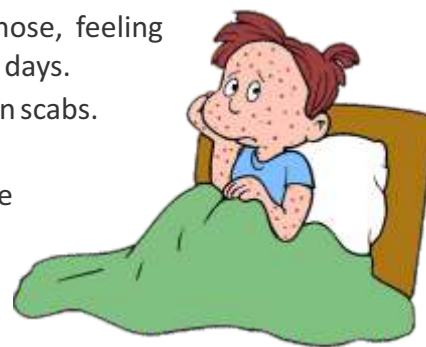
Chickenpox is a common viral infection that can reappear later in life as shingles. A vaccine is recommended for all infants and non-immune adults.

What is Chickenpox?

- Chickenpox is a viral illness
- In children it usually causes a relatively mild illness.
- Chickenpox in adults and immunosuppressed people can be severe.
- Infection in pregnancy can cause foetal malformations, skin scarring, and other problems in the baby.
- Before routine vaccination began in 2006, chickenpox was a very common illness. The incidence of chickenpox is likely to decrease as more people receive the vaccine.

What are the symptoms?

- Chickenpox begins with a sudden onset of slight fever, runny nose, feeling generally unwell and a skin rash. The rash appears over three to four days.
- The rash usually begins as small lumps that turn into blisters and then scabs.
- Symptoms usually occur two weeks after exposure to the virus.
- Most people recover without complications, but sometimes the infection can lead to serious complications, such as pneumonia.



If your child is displaying any symptoms, please consult your doctor.

School Attendance and Parenting Ideas

This week I have included two useful articles from Parenting Ideas. Since the beginning of last year we have noticed a significant decrease in our student attendance. This is of course partly explained by the Covid pandemic and the need for everyone in our community to be particularly cautious and to stay away from work / school, when we are unwell.

In the past, we have always been greatly impressed with the outstanding rates of attendance of most Shelley PS students. However, we need to ensure that we do not become complacent about good attendance at school - and particularly about ensuring students are at school ON TIME every day.

Remember: Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late. Children arriving late also cause disruption to learning for the other students in their class.

The first article, "On time, Everyday" is a great reminder of the importance of students being at school, every day they are able. "During the current COVID-19 pandemic parents are rightfully urged to take a cautious approach and keep children and young people at home if they show symptoms of the virus. It's a balancing act if you're a parent as one the most important things you can do to ensure your child has a bright future is to make sure he or she goes to school every day - and gets there on time. It sounds simple, but it's true. The correlation between school attendance and children's achievement levels is well established. The more time kids spend at school, the more likely they are to experience school success. Of course, most people know this intuitively, yet school absenteeism is a huge problem in Australian schools."

The second article provides some handy tips and ideas about "Getting to School on Time".

Jo-Ann Campion



Deputy Principal's Report

Shelley Super Stars

It is wonderful that we are able to congratulate so many students on their fantastic achievements with the presentation of Super Star Badges. Remember to keep your child's white certificates in a safe place at home when you receive them! When you have collected 5 white awards, send them in to your child's class teacher. The white awards will be put in the class envelope and sent to me, so I can organise the Super Star Badge and put your child's name in the newsletter.

You can hand in your white awards to your child's class teacher at any time, however, remember it takes time to update our database, process the Super Star Badges and put your child's name in the newsletter. White awards must be handed in by Wednesday afternoon - for the Super Star to be presented at the following Monday morning assembly. Remember, your child's name must be listed in the Newsletter or Shelley Spotlight, for them to be scheduled to receive a badge at the next K-6 Assembly.

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

In the next couple of weeks, our school will be taking part in the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). This is a nationwide census/survey of early childhood development held once every three years. The AEDC is an Australian Government initiative run by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and includes all children in their first year of full-time school.

The AEDC provides vital information to communities about how children are developing in the crucial early years. AEDC data is relied upon by schools, early childhood organisations, researchers and government to inform planning and improve services and supports for children and families.

The AEDC Instrument is completed by teachers about children in their first year of full-time school. The AEDC is voluntary and is not a school test. The information collected gives a picture of how children are developing before they start school in five key areas or domains. It shows what is being done well, and what can be improved. This is why it is important for all children in their first year of full-time school to be included in the AEDC.

Children do not need to do anything to be included in the census and will attend class as usual throughout the data collection period. During the census, teachers will record information, including children's names and dates of birth, based on their knowledge and observations of each child in their class. Teachers answer questions relating to the five key domains of early childhood development including; Physical health and wellbeing, Emotional maturity, Social competence, Language and cognitive skills (school-based) and Communication skills and general knowledge. You can see all the questions at <https://www.aedc.gov.au/avedi>.

You can be confident that your child's privacy will be protected.

We understand how important it is to keep your child's information private. This is why we use a secure site to collect and keep your child's information. The AEDC is managed in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). The APPs regulate the collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information by Australian government agencies, and some private sector organisations, and is part of the Privacy Act 1998 (Cth). APPs also form part of applicable state and territory privacy legislation and policies.

AEDC results for individual children are not reported and data about each child is de-identified. Children's names, ages, addresses and schools are not included when AEDC information is made publicly available. Individual children cannot be identified when AEDC information is linked with information from other organisations (such as health departments).

You can see how data is collected and presented by visiting www.aedc.gov.au/data. Data from the 2021 collection will be presented in a similar way.

Parents of students in Kindergarten received an AEDC information note early in Term 2.

Compulsory School Attendance

Even though it is flu season and we have had outbreaks of illness, it is very pleasing that our parents are so diligent with sending in notes, - either handwritten or via the school App to explain why children have been away from school. Explanation of student absences are compulsory and it is vital that we work together to ensure our high rates of attendance continue, to ensure maximum education growth for our students.

STUDENTS WHO ARE LATE WILL ...



MISS the important social interactions with friends before the bell that can relax them and set them up positively for the work day ahead

MISS the start of lessons so that learning becomes disjointed and difficult

MISS the morning greetings, messages, roll call, lunch orders collection of notes and monies etc.

Distract other children when they arrive and interrupt the momentum of the group

Receive **unnecessary attention** that may make them feel uncomfortable or embarrassed

**It's not OK
to be late!**



White Awards



What parents should know about school attendance:

Regular daily attendance is essential for your child's learning. Not only is it a legal requirement between the age of 6 and 17 years. It also greatly impacts on your child's quality of learning and their ability to reach their learning potential.

SOME QUESTIONS TO REFLECT UPON:

Do I have to send my child to school?

YES - all children are required by law to attend school between the ages of 6 and 17 years. Some children begin school below the age of 6. That is fine, but once the child is enrolled, it is expected that he / she will attend every day the school is open unless they are sick or have an acceptable reason.

When does attendance become important?

From the first day of attending school. Much of the play that goes on at school teaches your child many skills. If the basic skills are missed in the early years of school they are not fully learnt later on. It has been shown poor attendance in primary school leads to worse attendance at high school.

Do I need to send my child every day?

YES - this includes sports carnivals and excursions.

When may my child stay away from school?

The Department of Education accepts very few reasons.

The most valid ones are:

1. Illness/injury
2. Religious commitment

It is expected that dental and doctor appointments are made after school hours.

Having a birthday is **NOT** an acceptable reason for having a day off.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

It is a departmental requirement for all parents / caregivers to either notify the school verbally or in writing about the reasons for a student not attending school.

At Shelley, we are very proud of our strong attendance rates and work hard in partnership with parents to maintain them. This is of great benefit to the learning and engagement of our students.

If your child has been away from school, it is important to explain their absence with a note upon their return to school. Parents may also use the Shelley APP to inform us of the reason.

If your child returns to school without a note they will be reminded by their teacher to bring a note in. On the third day the classroom teacher will send a request for absence explanation note home. On the fourth day the classroom teacher will call the parent for a verbal explanation of a student's absence.

If a student does not attend school for 3 days (without prior notice to the teacher), the classroom teacher will call the parents to identify the reason for the absence and a medical certificate will be required to be presented upon the student's return.



Assistant Principals will hold attendance meetings with parents and class teachers after a student has

5 unexplained absences in a term

or

5 unexplained partial absences in a term

Mrs Williams or Ms Campion will request an attendance meeting with parents after a student has

10 unexplained absences in a term

or

10 unexplained partial absences in a term

**Congratulations to our Week 4 Shelley Super Stars:
Anastasia 4P, Ruby 4G and Sofia 1H**



**Congratulations to our Week 5 Shelley Super Stars:
Aarika 2S, Ismail 1M, Jonathan 2J and Ameliah 2L**





Shelley Super Stars

Congratulations to the following students on achieving their:

These students will be presented with their badges on Monday 24th May at the K-6 Assembly



▶ Maria 5/6D



▶ Aki 3/4L



▶ Inaayah 3T
Muhammad 5/6D



Leanita Williams - Deputy Principal



Kindergarten Zoo Excursion



Speechie Corner - Descriptive Snap

An activity to complete this fortnight: **Play "Descriptive Snap"**

How?

Give a fly swat to two children and tell them to sit facing each other. Place two (or more) picture cards between them, e.g. a fish and a dog. Ask them to name the pictures. Next, say a word that described only one of the cards, e.g. "fluffy", pause to let them think, then say "ready, set, go!" and let them 'snap' the corresponding picture. Use a variety of picture topics, e.g. animals, food, everyday objects.

Why?

To build a strong vocabulary in which the child can visualise the noun in real life, describe it, and form links between 2 or more nouns.

What do I look for?

Correctly naming the pictured objects/animals, and correctly recognising and matching the adjectives to the pictures.



How can I make this easier/harder?

Easier - Use 'colour' words or 'location' words e.g. you find it in the kitchen.

Harder - Use 'initial sounds' e.g. it starts with *rrr*

Sophie Gill - Speech Pathologist

Dates to Remember



Week 6

Wednesday 26th May National Sorry Day
Year 3 Zoo Excursion

Friday 28th May PSSA Round 2

Week 7

Monday 31st May Training Band Catch Up Workshop
- 8:00am-9:30am

Friday 28th May PSSA Round 3

PSSA

Round 2 - 28th May

League Tag
Marayong Oval

Netball
International Peace Park

Rugby League
Waite Reserve

Soccer
Morgan Power Reserve

Notes and Money to be Returned by Due Date

Year	Event	Due Date
K-6	Student Resources	asap

Please note: copies of all notes and Newsletters are available on the Shelley website.

| NSW Department of Education – School Infrastructure

Works notification April 2021

Dear parents/guardians and neighbours

The NSW Government is continuing to identify and manage asbestos containing materials across NSW schools to ensure the continued health and safety of our school communities.

From 25 April 2020, work has been scheduled to verify the presence and condition of asbestos containing material in the underflooring of selected buildings across a number of NSW schools.

RMA Contracting Group Pty Ltd has been contracted by School Infrastructure NSW to perform these inspections at your school, these will be conducted during out of school hours.

During this time, you may see contractors at your local school wearing protective clothing such as high visibility vests, overalls, gloves and footwear, which are a regulatory requirement. The health, safety, and well-being of the school and the local community is our highest priority. Please be assured these inspections will not pose a risk to the local community.

The community will be notified if an area requires attention or remediation and if required, independent licensed asbestos contractors will be engaged to conduct further works.

Thank you for your cooperation during this important work.

For more information contact:

School Infrastructure NSW

Email: schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au

Phone: 1300 482 651

www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au



On time, every day



During the current COVID-19 pandemic parents are rightfully urged to take a cautious approach and keep children and young people at home if they show symptoms of the virus.

It's a balancing act if you're a parent as one the most important things you can do to ensure your child has a bright future is to make sure he or she goes to school every day—and gets there on time. It sounds simple, but it's true. The correlation between school attendance and children's achievement levels is well established. The more time kids spend at school, the more likely they are to experience school success. Of course, most people know this intuitively, yet school absenteeism is a huge problem in Australian schools.

According to a report by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment authority nearly 13 per cent of Australian students are missing at least one year of schooling by the time they reach year 10. In today's highly competitive world, this rate of absenteeism is alarming, putting our kids at a distinct disadvantage.

Current research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day, with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do, valuable learning time is lost.

It's reassuring to know that you can maximise their chances of future success just by making sure they turn up to school every day. And, of course, regular school attendance also helps kids prepare for the workforce, where it will be expected that they turn up each day work-ready. The real world is unforgiving of those who stay away with no excuse.

As a parent:

- Commit to sending kids to school every day
- Make sure kids arrive at school and class on time
- Inform the school when they are away, sending medical certificates and other evidence of genuine absence
- Follow current COVID-19 health guidelines and recommendations
- Consider catching-up on missed work
- Make kids who are away stay in their bedroom, which is where unwell kids should be



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's an award-winning speaker and the author of 12 books for parents including *Spoonfed Generation*, and the bestselling *Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It*. Michael is a former teacher with 15 years experience, and has 30 years experience in parenting education. He also holds a Master of Educational Studies from Monash University specialising in parenting education.

INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose - Australia's No 1 parenting educator

Getting kids to school ON TIME!

Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late.

"Come on Jack! Get a move on. School starts in ten minutes and you're not even dressed yet!"

If this scenario sounds familiar then you are not alone. Anecdotal evidence suggests that getting children to school or pre school on time can be one of the most difficult tasks for parents.

Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late. Current research shows

that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do precious minutes are lost. A child who is fifteen minutes late to school each day misses one week of school every year.

How can you get your dawdling kids out the door without yelling yourself hoarse? Here are a few techniques and ideas for you to try to get your punctually-challenged children to school on time:

✓ **Establish a morning routine.**

Make sure your children know what is expected of them in the morning, and also what you will do. Resist nagging but be willing to take them to school even if they haven't fully prepared for the day.



✓ **Identify and remove distractions such as television.**

If the children are regular watchers before school change the routine and keep the TV off. It should only be turned on when children are completely ready for school.

✓ **Teach some of the basics of time management.**

The average adult underestimates by about 25 per cent the time it takes to do various jobs. Make sure you have realistic time estimates and stop packing so much into the time you allocate. Encourage older children to estimate how long it takes to do activities such as getting ready in the morning. Then they can measure the time taken to do these tasks and compare their estimates with real time.

✓ **Arrive at school ten minutes early.**

Plan to arrive at school early rather than be there on time. This idea works well for perpetual latecomers, whether young or old.

✓ **Model a good routine.**

Its pointless expecting children to be organised in the morning if you are in a muddle yourself. Set a good example by being as methodical as possible and avoid sleeping in unless your children are so organised that they get you breakfast in bed. And pigs might fly as well!

Published by Michael Grose
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For more ideas, support and advice
for all your parenting challenges
visit: www.parentingideas.com.au


Parenting ideas
MICHAEL GROSE

No knives at school – parent factsheet

Health and Safety Directorate

There is no good reason to bring a knife to school.

NSW now has the toughest knife laws in Australia. As a parent, you need to be aware of these laws, as you can also be charged if you allow your child to carry a knife.

No knives allowed at school under any circumstances

If a student has a knife at school the principal may call the police.

The student may be expelled or suspended immediately. Possessing a knife includes your child simply having one in their bag or locker. Having a knife for self-protection is also illegal. If you are concerned about your child's wellbeing or safety, contact the principal.

Tough penalties apply for children convicted of knife offences, including gaol sentences of up to 25 years if someone is injured with a knife during an assault.

Every child has the right to feel safe and secure at school. There is no good reason for a child to ever have a knife at school.

If you want to talk about children and knives at school, please contact the principal.

What kind of knives are prohibited?

As school policy is designed to keep all students safe, no type of knife is allowed at school. That means no butter knives or fruit knives in lunchboxes, or knife tools for craft purposes.

Flick knives, ballistic knives, sheath knives, push daggers, trench knives, butterfly knives and star knives are all prohibited.

Your child cannot bring to school any item that can be used as a weapon (such as a chisel).

In lessons requiring the use of knives, for example cooking or trades, your child's teacher will supply and supervise the use of the tools.

There are some senior subjects, such as hospitality, where children may be required to have their own knives.

Your child's school will advise you about these courses and the procedures for carrying knives legally to and from school.

The law makes parents responsible

You need to make certain your child is aware of the school's rules and the State laws about knives.

If you allow your child to carry or possess a knife at school or in a public place, you can be charged.

The police can search any child they suspect of having a knife. They can confiscate any dangerous object they might find during the search.

Your child must comply with such a police search, or they may be arrested and charged.

It is also illegal for anyone to sell a knife to anyone who is less than 16 years old

Communicable Diseases Factsheet

Chickenpox is a common viral infection that can reappear later in life as shingles. Vaccination is recommended for all infants and non immune adults.

Last updated: 22 April 2014

Chickenpox and Shingles

What is chickenpox?

- Chickenpox is a viral illness caused by the herpes zoster virus (also known as the Varicella-Zoster virus)
- In children it usually causes a relatively mild illness.
- Chickenpox in adults and immunosuppressed people can be severe.
- Infection in pregnancy can cause foetal malformations, skin scarring, and other problems in the baby.
- Before routine vaccination began in November 2005, chickenpox was a very common illness. The incidence of chickenpox appears to have decreased as more people receive the vaccine.

What are the symptoms?

- Chickenpox (varicella) begins with a sudden onset of slight fever, runny nose, feeling generally unwell and a skin rash.
- The rash usually begins as small lumps that turn into blisters and then scabs.
- The rash appears over three to four days. At any one time, the lesions of the rash vary in stages of development.
- Symptoms usually occur two weeks after exposure to the virus.
- Most people recover without complications, but sometimes the infection can lead to serious complications, such as pneumonia and inflammation of the brain. Rarely, the infection can be fatal.
- Persons who are previously vaccinated can still get chickenpox. If chickenpox occurs in a vaccinated person it is usually mild and less contagious than in an unvaccinated person.

How is it spread?

- Early in the illness, the virus is spread by coughing.
- Later in the illness, the virus is spread by direct contact with the fluid in the blisters.
- The infection is highly contagious to people who have never had chickenpox or who have not been vaccinated.
- People are infectious from one or two days before the rash appears (that is, during the runny nose phase) and up to five days after (when the blisters have formed crusts or scabs)
- Chickenpox infection triggers an immune response and people rarely get chickenpox twice.

Who is at risk?

- Anyone who has not had chickenpox or been vaccinated in the past can get chickenpox.
- People with a past history of chickenpox are likely to be immune to the virus. Even adults with no history of chickenpox have a chance of being immune (because of past infection that was mild). Doctors sometimes perform a blood test to see if these people need a vaccination.

How is it prevented?

- A free varicella containing vaccine (MMRV) is now recommended for all children at 18 months of age.
- Students in their first year of high school who have not previously received varicella vaccine and who have not had chickenpox are offered a varicella vaccine.
- The Varicella vaccine is recommended for all non-immune adolescents (>14 years) and adults. This involves two doses, at least 1 month apart. It is especially recommended for people at high risk, for example, health care workers, people living with or working with small children, women planning a pregnancy, and household contact of persons who are immunosuppressed.
- People with chickenpox should avoid others (and not attend childcare or school) until at least five days after onset of the rash and all the blisters have dried.
- People with chickenpox should cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of soiled tissues, wash their hands well and not share eating utensils, food or drinking cups.
- Pregnant women should avoid anyone with chickenpox or shingles and should see their doctor if they have been around someone with these illnesses.
- Children with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or who are receiving chemotherapy should avoid anyone with chickenpox or shingles as the infection can be especially severe.

How is it diagnosed?

Most cases can be diagnosed based on the symptoms and by appearance of the rash. Sometimes the diagnosis is confirmed by testing samples taken from the rash or from blood.

What is Shingles?

- Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the virus that causes chickenpox, usually in adulthood and many years after the initial chickenpox illness.
- The illness is characterised by a painful chickenpox-like rash on a small area of skin, usually on one side of the body.
- Pain and tingling associated with the rash may persist for weeks or months after the rash has cleared. This is called post-herpetic neuralgia.
- The virus can be spread by direct contact with the skin rash of infected people. This causes chickenpox in people who are not immune.
- Shingles develops more commonly in people who are immunosuppressed.

How are shingles and chickenpox treated?

Shingles can be treated with special antiviral drugs such as acyclovir. Your general practitioner can advise on ways to minimise the discomfort associated with the symptoms of infection.

Chickenpox infection usually resolves without treatment.

What is the public health response?

Chickenpox is not currently notifiable in NSW but the incidence is monitored through the number of patients attending emergency departments and the number of patients who are hospitalised with chickenpox or shingles.

- Varicella vaccine protects against chickenpox, even if given up to five days after exposure.
- Short-term immunisation with varicella-zoster immunoglobulin (VZIG) - which is made from antibodies in donated blood - can prevent illness in people at high risk of complications. This needs to be given within 96 hours of exposure to the virus to be effective. People at high risk of complications following exposure include pregnant women who have not had chickenpox and who have not been immunised, newborn babies, and some immunosuppressed patients.

For further information please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 or visit the New South Wales Health website www.health.nsw.gov.au



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