

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS REGARDING SCABIES

Scabies has been discovered at the school

Your child is part of a class or a year group where someone has contracted scabies. Scabies is a skin rash caused by mites; a small parasite that can live in our skin. In this information letter we explain what the school is doing to stop the infection and what you need to do as parents/guardians. Remember, there is no shame in contracting scabies – anyone can get it. Scabies is not dangerous, but it can be bothersome.

Symptoms

- Severe itching (often exacerbated at night and when sweating)
- Small bumps or blisters on the skin, often starting on the hands before spreading to larger parts of the body.
- It usually takes up to four weeks from contracting scabies until symptoms develop, but this can take as little as one to three days in individuals who have contracted scabies previously.

What the school is doing

The school cooperates with the district/municipal medical officer. The school will notify known close contacts, who should undergo treatment. The school will also clean affected textiles, such as furniture, clothes, and stuffed toys that belong to the school.

What is a close contact?

A close contact is someone that the infected individual has had close skin contact with (contact which lasted longer than 15 minutes at a time) over the last four weeks, or someone that the infected individual has shared a bed, clothes or towels with.

If your child is a close contact

- Close contacts may be infected even if they do not present with symptoms yet, and are therefore recommended preventive treatment. Complete the treatment exactly as prescribed (see link to separate information letter on the next page) regardless of whether the child is experiencing symptoms.
- Keep your child home from school for 24 hours after starting treatment, to give the treatment time to work. After this, the child can return to school.
- Repeat the treatment after seven days. This is important to ensure that the child does not get re-infected with scabies if they had been infected initially. The child does not need to stay at home after the second course of treatment, but remember that if any skin is washed during the first 24 hours, the medication must be reapplied to the area.

If your child is not a close contact

- Monitor the child for any symptoms over the next four weeks.
- Contact your doctor for help and advice if symptoms appear.
- Notify the school if the child develops any symptoms.

If your child has been infected

- Make sure that any close contacts of the child who do not attend the school (other friends and family members for example) are notified that they are close contacts (see definition of close contact). They should be treated for scabies at the same time as your child – regardless of whether they are experiencing any symptoms. Scabies does not go away on its own and must always be treated. Complete the treatment exactly as prescribed (see link to separate information letter on the next page).
- Keep your child home from school for 24 hours after starting treatment. After this, the infection will be sufficiently under control for the child to return to school.
- Repeat the same treatment and measures after seven days. This is important to ensure that the scabies does not return. The child does not need to stay at home after the second course of treatment, but remember that if any area of skin is washed during the first 24 hours, the medication must be reapplied to the area.

How scabies spreads

Scabies usually spreads through skin contact, but rarely if the skin contact is brief. The risk of infection increases if the skin contact lasts for 15 minutes or longer. Generally, the risk of infection increases in situations where people are in close contact over time.

Scabies can also spread via towels, bedding, clothing and other textiles recently used by an infected individual.

Treatment for scabies

Information about relevant drugs and how to treat scabies can be found on the NIPH website:

www.fhi.no/treatment-scabies.