



Office of School Health

Dear Parent or Guardian,

An individual in your child's school has been diagnosed with fifth disease, an infection caused by Parvovirus B19.

This virus is spread from person to person by contact with infected respiratory secretions (droplets from the nose and throat). In most children, fifth disease is very mild. Children may develop red ("slapped") cheeks and a lacy rash which begins on the trunk and moves outward to the arms, buttocks, and thighs, which may come and go for several weeks. Many children have no symptoms.

Children are most contagious with Parvovirus B19 *before* they develop the distinctive rash of fifth disease. At that time, they may have fever, muscle aches, and headache. Once the rash develops, however, they are no longer contagious, and may return to school as long as they feel well.

Some groups of people are at risk for more severe disease following infection with Parvovirus B19. These include:

- 1.) People with sickle cell disease - may have severe anemia (low red blood cell count) requiring medical treatment.
- 2.) People with weakened immune systems, including HIV infection - may have severe, chronic anemia requiring medical treatment.
- 3.) Pregnant women - the virus may have harmful effects on the unborn baby

If you or your child have any of the conditions listed above, you should contact your health care provider to discuss the risks of exposure.

If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse at 718-891-9005