

## 8. SCABIES

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent or Guardian,

There has been a case of scabies within your child's school and your child may have been exposed. We are bringing this to your attention because scabies can spread rapidly unless all affected children are promptly treated.

### **What is scabies?**

Scabies is an infestation of the skin with a tiny mite smaller than a pinhead. The mites burrow anywhere in the skin, mostly on hands, and cannot be seen. The rash is caused by the body's reaction to the mite and the scratching that occurs.

### **How could my child get scabies?**

Anyone can get scabies. The mite passes from person to person through skin contact. Scabies is unlikely to be caught by short contact such as shaking hands. Longer contact is needed but could be as little as 5 to 10 minutes. Children playing together are especially likely to pass it from one to the other. The itching may occur anytime from two to eight weeks after catching the mites, so mites can pass to someone else before the rash appears.

### **How will I know if my child has scabies?**

If your child develops an itchy rash bring them to their doctor.

### **What should I do if my child has scabies?**

A variety of special lotions and creams that kill mites are available at the pharmacy. It is best to see your doctor first to be sure that it is scabies. It is important to follow the instructions that come with the lotion carefully, as there are a number of different preparations available. As spread within households is common, it is a good idea to treat all family members at the same time even if there are no symptoms

Thank you for giving this your attention. Your GP or pharmacist will be able to answer any further questions that you might have concerning scabies and the preparations available to treat it.