



**Penola**  
CATHOLIC COLLEGE  
EST. 1995

23 October 2023

Dear Families,

It has come to my attention that a student on the Senior Campus has contracted shingles. This letter is to advise you to monitor your child for symptoms.

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is caused by the varicella zoster virus, which is also responsible for chickenpox. It occurs because of a reactivation of the chickenpox virus, which remains in the nerve cells of the body after an attack of chickenpox. People who get chickenpox are at risk of developing shingles later in life since the virus lies dormant in the body. Fortunately, it is rare to have more than one attack of shingles.

Anyone who has had chickenpox can develop shingles. However, people who have never had chickenpox can catch the virus from another person with shingles. A person who has never had chickenpox, but comes into contact with a case of shingles, would develop chickenpox (not shingles).

Shingles is a skin rash characterised by pain and blistering which usually appears on one side of the face or body. Tender, painful skin, tiredness, and headache may occur 2 to 3 days before the skin turns red and breaks out in tiny fluid-filled blisters.

Shingles can be spread when a person comes into contact with fluid contained in the blisters. The virus can be spread by direct contact with the lesions or by touching any dressings, sheets or clothes soiled with discharge from the spots.

What can you do?

I seek your cooperation in monitoring your child for any symptoms. In the instance where shingles is detected please visit [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) and search for "shingles" for advice on identifying and treating shingles.

If your child develops shingles, you need to inform:

- the school and advise when the symptoms started. Penola Catholic College is aware that shingles can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.
- parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

If my child has shingles, when can they return to school?

Students with shingles should not attend school until their rash has developed crusts. People with shingles should keep the rash covered, not touch or scratch the rash, and wash their hands often to prevent the spread of shingles.

Kind regards

**Ms Erin Bonavia**  
Deputy Principal  
Senior Campus