



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

# Eczema and school

Rachael Meade

Senior Education Advisor  
RCH Education Institute  
(03)9322-5113

[rachael.meade@rch.org.au](mailto:rachael.meade@rch.org.au)

[www.rch.org.au/edinst](http://www.rch.org.au/edinst)

# Strategic Plan



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

## Partnerships:

*To maintain and extend mutually beneficial partnerships with the Department of Education and Training (DE&T), other education systems and health organisations that lead to the best possible educational outcomes for students with a health condition.*

# Support for schools and students



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

*To establish, disseminate knowledge and inform practice, both at a system and school level, to enable the strongest connections between students with a health condition and their schools.*

# Working in a multidisciplinary team



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Received referral dermatology team for J Smith

5 day admission for infected eczema 2005

J has missed 1/3 of school year due to flare-ups

Finding it hard to keep up with school

Self-esteem issues

Complex family situation

# A patient...but also a young person



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Friends

Teachers

Supportive  
School

Classwork



Access to help

Fitting in

Transition

Extra-curricular  
activities

# Importance of being connected to school



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- “Parent-family connectedness and perceived school connectedness were protective against every health risk behavior measure except history of pregnancy.”
- According to the 1997 Resnick, MD., Bearman, P.S., Blum, R.W., et al. Protecting adolescents from harm: findings from the National Longitudinal Student of Adolescent Health, JAMA, 1997; 278:823-832

# Importance of being connected to school



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

“Risk factors cluster in individuals; young people who report poor school connectedness are more likely to report increased conflict with teachers, poorer communication skills and poorer self-concept”

The Gatehouse Project. Promoting a positive social environment in secondary schools

Dr Jane Burns on behalf of the Gatehouse Project Team, Centre for Adolescent Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

# Importance of being connected to school



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- Research undertaken by Fuller et al (1998) found that students in Victorian schools rated 'peer connectedness' and 'fitting in at school' amongst the highest-ranking protective factors against various 'risky' behaviours for young people.

Fuller, A., McGraw, K., & Goodyear, M. (1998) The mind of youth. Resilience - A connect project. Melbourne, La Trobe University, [online] Available from Internet May 24th 2004, <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/druged/pdfs/MindYouth.pdf>



# Importance of being connected to school



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

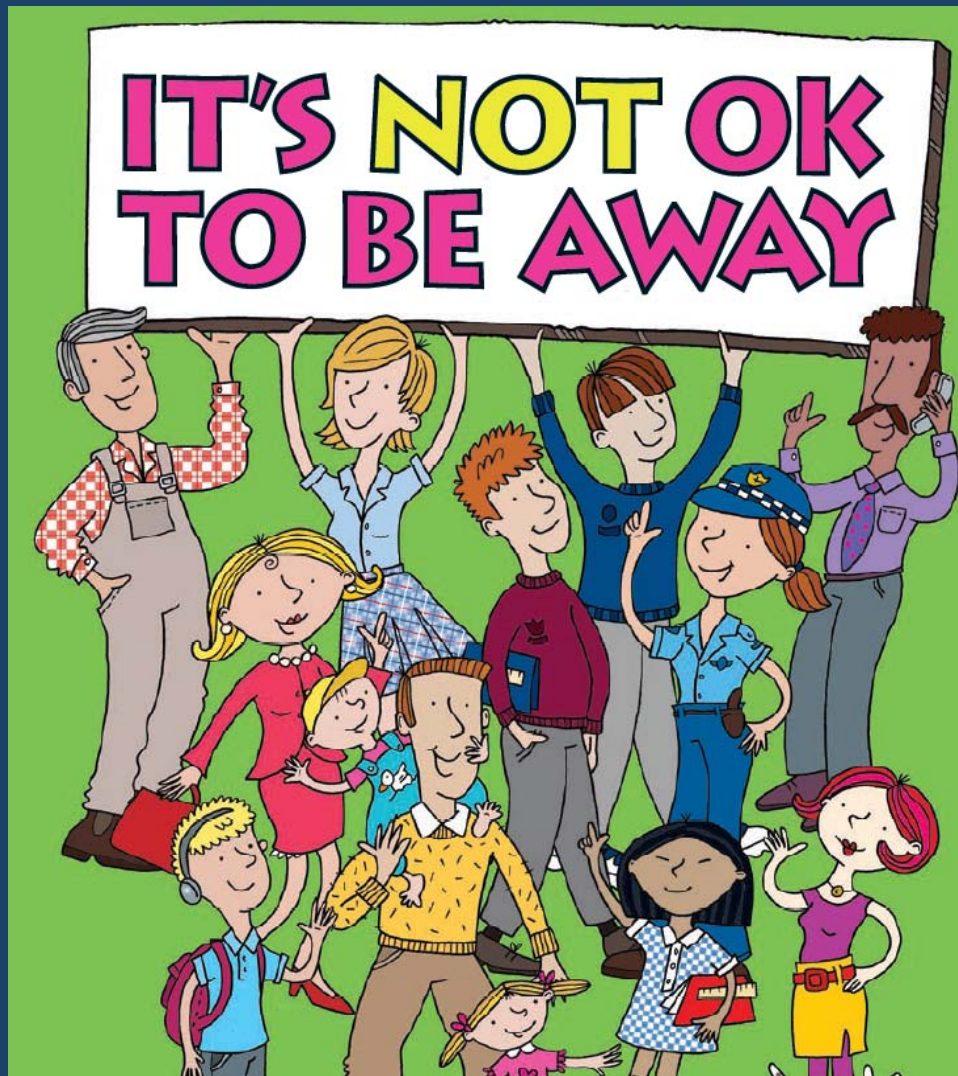
“Poor patterns of attendance place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.”

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/welfare/attend.htm>

“Student attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the community”



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE



# It's Not OK to Be Away



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- Make school part of the agenda and demonstrate that education is valued
- Promote the reasons why students should be attending school
- Improve communication between school, home and the community
- Encourage students to attend school prior to appointments or return to school after appointments.

# Managing Eczema at School



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- Document is currently being written by RCH Education Institute and Dermatology Department RCH
- Developed from document developed specifically for J
- Aims to build the capacity of schools to respond to the needs of students with eczema
- Expresses that should a student be unable to attend school due to eczema, they should seek medical attention
- Provides schools with whole school and classroom strategies
- Will be available on RCH Education Institute and Dermatology Department RCH websites when completed

# Whole School Strategies



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- School, health professionals, family, and student working together to ensure comfort with the provision of information
- Program support group (multidisciplinary)
- Monitoring attendance
- Consideration of school uniform issues
- Careers assistance (VCAL/VCE)
- Education for staff & students
- Establish key contact person – network tree
- Pre-determined spaces for moisturising, cool compressing and changing clothes

# Classroom Strategies



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- Encourage student to remove jumpers when indoors or during sport
- Access to drink bottle on desk
- Remind student not to sit near a heater or in direct sunlight
- Cotton covered chairs or cotton mats on carpet
- Provision of soap free wash
- Access to wet towels/wipes to apply directly to affected skin
- Keep the student active to divert their attention from the itch



# Other Support Mechanisms

- Community supports i.e. mental health, occupational therapy etc.
- Visiting Teacher Service – DET, CEO, AISV
- Ronald McDonald Learning Program  
[www.rmhc.org.au](http://www.rmhc.org.au)

# Case closed



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- School & family have various supports in place:
  - Improved communication between school and family
  - Improved understanding of and working together to manage eczema at school
  - Attendance agreement
  - Access to community supports
  - Access to RCH & multidisciplinary team
  - Visiting teacher



# Useful Resources



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

## Sample Letter/School Newsletter Notice Regarding Notification of Measles and Chickenpox

School Name

Dear Parent/Carer

I write to inform you that a student in our school community is currently receiving medical treatment. He/she participates actively in the normal school program without any major limitations. A concern, however, is if this student develops measles or chickenpox, he/she can become significantly ill. I seek your cooperation in preventing this situation.

If your son/daughter has or may have measles or chickenpox, I request that you do not send them to school during this period and notify the school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
(Principal)

# Useful Resources



ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute  
[www.rch.org.au/edinst](http://www.rch.org.au/edinst)

Royal Children's Hospital Dermatology Department  
[http://www.rch.org.au/derm/index.cfm?doc\\_id=4595](http://www.rch.org.au/derm/index.cfm?doc_id=4595)

DET Student Wellbeing (Disabilities and Impairments)  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing)

DET "It's not OK to be away"  
[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/welfare/itsnotoktobeaway.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/welfare/itsnotoktobeaway.htm)

Catholic Education Office Melbourne  
[www.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au)