

# *Letter to My School*

Eczema is a skin condition, which results in dry, flaky, scaly and reddened skin, which can become extremely itchy. Eczema is not infectious or contagious - other people cannot 'catch' it from the sufferer. In many people it is hereditary, and can be worsened by trigger factors such as certain foods, chemicals, some fabrics, dust mites, pollens in the air, animal hairs, overheating and stress.

The skin of an eczema sufferer becomes extremely, intolerably itchy. Broken skin can become easily infected, and the dual combination of infected, healing wounds and eczema can be distressingly discomforting. Because the skin is thickened and the usual protective layers of ordinary skin are disturbed, the person with eczema does not have the normal cooling mechanisms working properly eg, on a warm day, the tiny blood vessels in normal skin come closer to the surface to aid in cooling us, and also sweating helps. The surface skin structure in eczematous skin is thickened and dry, and the overheating experienced must be similar to what we would feel if we ran around in a plastic raincoat in the middle of a hot, sunny day - the heat just can't get out!

So other methods of cooling are required to help the eczema sufferer. Using a cold, damp washer on the skin, sitting under a fan, having a cool drink, a tepid bath, are some ways these people need to employ to help cool their skin.

When the eczema sufferer gets hot, and the blood flow to the surface increases, this has the effect of making the skin itchier. So it is very important in a child with severe eczema to help them not to get to this stage too often when their skin is already flared up, because this only results in the cycle of intolerable itching, scratching and more resultant skin damage.

\_\_\_\_\_ (*child's name*), in \_\_\_\_\_ (*class*)  
has severe chronic Atopic Eczema, and you will encounter him/her in your classes or  
on duty from time-to-time. We consider that it is important for the staff helping  
\_\_\_\_\_ (*child's name*) throughout his/her school days  
to be aware of the condition of eczema and the discomfort his/her condition brings to  
his/her school experience at times. Where you can assist by prevention of overheating,  
helping to cool him/her, attending to damaged skin or just in helping other adults and  
children to understand the condition, we would appreciate your assistance.  
There is a dear little, bright, interested, curious child inside that outer layer of itchy  
skin - please help him/her to have a good and enjoyable experience of school at  
\_\_\_\_\_ (*School's name*). Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(*Signed and dated by child's Parent/Guardian*)

*This information was collated from various publications and pamphlets by a member of the*

**ECZEMA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA INC**

*For more information, please contact 1300 300 182 or visit [www.eczema.org.au](http://www.eczema.org.au).*

