

Dear Parents/Carers

Scarlet Fever and Invasive Strep A Disease

You may have seen recent news articles relating to Scarlet Fever and the Strep A infection. We would like to provide you with some more information, that may help you to better understand these diseases.

Scarlet Fever

Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection, usually mild but highly infectious. It is caused by a bacteria called group A streptococcus (GAS), which also causes sore throat and impetigo. The early symptoms of scarlet fever include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, followed by a fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel. The rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, but the sandpapery feel will usually be present. Other common symptoms are flushed cheeks, pallor around the mouth and a 'strawberry-like' tongue.

You should contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect that your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment with antibiotics reduces the risk of complications such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection. If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

Invasive group A Strep Infection

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called group A streptococci. In very rare occasions, this bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS). There are lots of other viruses that cause sore throats, colds and coughs, which should resolve without medical help. However, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38°C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39°C or higher
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many bugs. Please remind your child(ren) of the importance of washing their hands properly with soap and using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes.

Kind regards

Mrs A Chitty
Head Teacher