

December 2022

Dear families

The latest data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows that scarlet fever cases continue to remain higher than we would typically see at this time of year.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is highly infectious. Therefore, look out for symptoms in your child, which include a **sore throat, headache, and fever**, along with a **fine, pinkish or red body rash** with a **sandpapery feel**. On **darker skin**, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a **sandpapery feel**.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever because early treatment with antibiotics is important to reduce 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.

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called group A streptococci. These bacteria also cause other respiratory and skin infections such as strep throat and impetigo.

In very rare circumstances, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS). As reported in the news over the weekend, this has unfortunately accounted for the deaths of 6 children under 10 years of age across the UK recently.

If your child is showing signs of deterioration after a bout of scarlet fever, or after a sore throat or respiratory infection, it is important that you speak to a health professional. As a parent / carer, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement in seeking medical advice.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse and deteriorating unusually quickly
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- for younger children, your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- you have a baby under 3 months who has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- you have a baby who feels hotter than usual to touch when you touch their back or chest or feels sweaty
- your child is very tired, exhausted 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 will not stay awake

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of any bugs. We are reiterating this in school e.g., washing hands for 20 seconds with soap, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes and keeping a distance from others when feeling unwell. This will reduce the risk of picking up and spreading infections. Please reiterate these expectations at home to your child.

Yours sincerely

Emma Steele
Principal

