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**Headteacher:** Mr J Parr BA Hons

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## Dear Parents/Carers

Further to my letter earlier this week, we have now received additional guidance from the UK Health Security Agency (UK HSA) following a small number of reported or suspected cases of scarlet fever in school.

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others.

The symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea, and vomiting.

This is followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth and in some cases, this may be accompanied by red tongue (called "strawberry tongue").

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever:

- see your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
  - make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor
  - stay at home, away from nursery, school, or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection

Children who have had chickenpox recently may develop more serious infection during an outbreak of scarlet fever and so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason, please seek medical assistance immediately.

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

You can find more information in the guidance Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment, Scarlet fever - NHS (www.nhs.uk) & <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scarlet-fever-symptoms-diagnosis-treatment>

I thought it would be useful to also share the following extracts from the Department for Education guidance:

UKHSA is reporting an increased number of cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) compared to normal at this time of year. There is no evidence that a new strain is circulating, and the increase is most likely related to high amounts of circulating bacteria and social mixing.

Strep A is a common type of bacteria. Most strep A infections are mild and easily treated, but some are more serious.

Common symptoms of strep A include:

- [flu-like symptoms](#), such as a high temperature, swollen glands, or an aching body
- [sore throat](#) (strep throat or [tonsillitis](#))
- a rash that feels rough, like sandpaper ([scarlet fever](#))
- scabs and sores ([impetigo](#))
- pain and swelling ([cellulitis](#))
- severe muscle aches
- nausea and vomiting

Most strep A infections are not serious and can be treated with antibiotics.

But rarely, the infection can cause serious problems. This is called invasive group A strep (iGAS).

As well as advising schools on steps to be taken in the event of confirmed cases, the guidance also advises

- *To prevent the spread of Strep A, UKHSA advises children, young people and staff to implement good [hand and respiratory hygiene](#) practices.*
- *If there are confirmed or suspected cases in an education or childcare setting, there is no reason for children to be kept at home if they are well.*

We will continue to send more information as we receive it but, in the meantime, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school reception as normal.

Yours sincerely,

John Parr

Headteacher