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Wednesday 7th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Scarlet Fever

We are writing to ensure you have the latest UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance and links to updates about Scarlet Fever.

UKHSA is keen ensure you are aware of the signs, symptoms.

Scarlet fever is caused by common bacteria which many people carry in their throats and on their skin. It doesn't always result in illness, but it can cause mild and more serious infections. The most serious of these are infections caused by the bacteria getting into parts of the body where it is not normally found, such as the lungs or bloodstream. In rare cases an infection can be fatal. Whilst these infections are still uncommon, there has been an increase in cases this year, particularly in children under 10 and sadly, a small number of deaths.

Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

Parents and carers and school staff should look out for early symptoms of scarlet fever in children which include sore throats, headaches, fever, nausea and vomiting.

After 12 to 48 hours the characteristic red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach and then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture.

The scarlet rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present.

Children will also typically have flushed cheeks and pallor around the mouth, which may be accompanied by a 'strawberry tongue'.

Parents should contact NHS 111 online, or call NHS 111 or their GP if they suspect their child has scarlet fever, because early treatment with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications, such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection.

Infection control advice

The bacteria are spread by close contact with an infected person and can be passed on through coughs and sneezes or from a wound.

Children should be encouraged to wash their hands properly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, and keeping away from others when feeling unwell, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up, or spreading, infections.

Any children with suspected scarlet fever should stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

These NHS resources may be also helpful:

NHS information about Scarlet Fever: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

NHS information called Is my child too ill for school? <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Dangerfield".

Sam Dangerfield

Headteacher