



8<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Whilst we are all starting to enjoy our Christmas activities over the next few weeks, I thought I would reassure you about our cleaning and hygiene routines around school, as you will be aware there has been a considerable amount of media coverage about the increase of cases of Group A Streptococcal (GAS) infection in recent days.

One of the best ways to stop the spread of all germs is through hand washing in warm soapy water. We have reviewed our hygiene routines and children are now washing their hands in the classrooms when they arrive in school, before dinner and when they come in from lunchtime. As well as this we have other hygiene routines in place such as:

- Children sanitise their hands as they go into the dining hall for their dinner.
- Tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray during the day.
- Door handles and banisters are also wiped during the day.
- Children are taught to sneeze or cough into their elbow and used tissues are put in a bin with a lid.
- There is sanitisers in every classroom for children to use.

Strep A bacteria causes scarlet fever which 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. These bacteria also cause other respiratory and skin infections such as impetigo.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of more serious complications. 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 and for **at least 48 hours if your child has impetigo**.

**On very rare occasions**, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A Streptococcal (iGAS) which can be very serious and this is why you will have heard about it on the news.

As a parent, 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](#)

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- 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 baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- 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 including Strep A, coughs and colds. The enhanced hygiene routines in school will help prevent the spread of these germs.

If we receive any guidance from the Local Authority or the Department of Education then we will share this with you. If you wish to read more for yourself, please follow this link to the Government website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-update-on-scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep>

**All children should attend school as normal.**

I hope you and your child enjoy the next couple of weeks in school and if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to come and see me. **If your doctor confirms that your child has scarlet fever, it is important that you inform the school immediately.**

*Teresa Shrestha*

Headteacher