

St Mary's Farnham Royal Church of England Primary School

We aspire to grow as a community through FAITH as a FAMILY.
Thriving for all our FUTURES enabling us to FLOURISH



Thursday 8th December 2022

Information from the Department of Education

Scarlet Fever and Group Strep A Infections

The Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan, is closely monitoring the increased cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) and scarlet fever. As a Department, we are working closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), who are leading on the response.

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.

What are scarlet fever and Strep A?

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called Group A streptococci (Strep A). The bacteria usually cause a mild infection that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

In very rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS).

What are the symptoms of Strep A/scarlet fever?

Strep A infections can cause a range of symptoms that parents should be aware of, including:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- 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

If a child becomes unwell with these symptoms, parents should contact their GP practice or contact NHS 111 (which operates a 24/7 service) to seek advice.

PLEASE KEEP SCHOOL INFORMED OF ANY ILLNESS AND/OR DIAGNOSIS SO AS WE CAN MONITOR ANY OUTBREAKS

If a child has scarlet fever, they should stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

Parents should trust their own judgement and if their child seems seriously unwell call 999 or go to A&E if:

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

How to help prevent Strep A?

To prevent the spread of Strep A, UKHSA advises children, young people and staff to implement good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

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