

# Bitterley C of E Primary School Academy 2-11



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Dear Parents/Carers

## Scarlet Fever and link to Strep A.

There has been a case of Scarlet Fever within the School and your child may have been exposed.

### What is Scarlet Fever?

Scarlet Fever is a scattered red rash and high temperatures caused by bacteria. Prompt treatment with an antibiotic usually prevents further complications and will also prevent the spread to others. It is normally uncommon in the UK nowadays, but this Winter of 2022 has seen increases.

Scarlet fever is also known as Scarlatina, although this often refers to a milder form of the disease.

It usually follows a [sore throat](#) or a skin infection ([impetigo](#)) caused by particular strains of streptococcus bacteria.

Scarlet fever is very infectious and can easily spread to other people.

### What are the symptoms of Scarlet Fever?

A scattered red rash that is often most marked in the creases of the joints and over the stomach. The rash usually turns white when pressed. The rash does not appear on the face, but the cheeks can look red. The skin may feel rough to the touch and is often described as feeling like sandpaper. A white coating on the tongue, which peels a few days later leaving the tongue red & swollen and covered in little bumps called 'strawberry tongue'.



### What should I do if I think my child has Scarlet Fever?

If your child develops any of the symptoms take them to your GP for an examination. Please inform the doctor that a child(ren) at the school has scarlet fever. The doctor is likely to prescribe an antibiotic and it is important that your child takes the full course of medicine. The symptoms of scarlet fever may be relieved by:

- Drinking plenty of cool fluids or eating soft foods (if the individual has a sore throat)
- Eating soft foods if you have a sore throat
- Taking paracetamol to bring down a high temperature
- Using calamine lotion or antihistamine tablets to relieve itching

### Can a child return to school?

A child can return to school when well, but **only after** at least 24 hours of antibiotic treatment or if the child does not take anti-biotics, 14 days **after** the onset of symptoms.

The bacteria are spread through contact with nose and mouth secretions. So:

- Wash hands thoroughly after wiping noses;
- Wash hands thoroughly using soap and hot water before preparing food;
- Wash plates and dishes well in hot soapy water;
- Do not share cups, straws, spoons and eating utensils etc
- Do not share toothbrushes.

Your GP will be able to answer any further question you may have in relation to Scarlet Fever.

### **Pregnancy advice**

There's no evidence to suggest that getting scarlet fever during pregnancy will harm your baby. But it can make the expectant Mother feel unwell, so it's best to avoid close contact with anyone who has it. The expectant Mother should contact their GP if they get symptoms. Many of the antibiotics used for scarlet fever are considered to be safe to take during pregnancy.

### **How long scarlet fever lasts**

Scarlet fever lasts for around 1 week.

You can spread scarlet fever to other people up to 6 days before you get symptoms until 24 hours after you take your 1st dose of antibiotics.

If you do not take antibiotics, you can spread the infection for 2 to 3 weeks after your symptoms start.

### **Links to invasive Strep A**

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 occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS). While still uncommon, there has been an increase in invasive Group A strep cases this year, particularly in children under 10.

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](#)
- 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. By teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap 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.

The bacteria usually causes a mild infection producing sore throats or scarlet fever that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely

M Halstead  
Head of School