



**West Moors Middle School**

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Dorset Council have shared the following key information with **Education settings advice about Strep A and Scarlet Fever**.

You may have seen reports in the national media about a rise in cases of Scarlet Fever. There is a higher number of these infections than is normally seen at this time of year. We are sending out this communication to provide further information on this national situation and guidance on the actions you can take to help reduce the spread of this infection.

Scarlet Fever is caused by a bacteria called *group A streptococci*, or “group A strep”. It is very contagious for people who are in close contact with one another through infected droplets in coughs, sneezes, mucus and saliva. Typically, it causes a mild illness for most people however, treatment with antibiotics is important to avoid complications.

Some symptoms of Scarlet Fever include:

- sore throat
- headache
- fever
- a fine, pinkish or red body rash that feels like sandpaper

You can read more about the symptoms of Scarlet Fever on the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) website & see clinical photographs on the [NHS website](http://NHS website).

### What to do

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- 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



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**For further information, please see:**

Information on GAS infections is provided in the following blog that is being updated by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the lead agency responding to this national situation: [Group A Strep - What you need to know - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](#).

Information about Scarlet Fever in The Spotty Book, which has now been updated and taken on as national guidance. It is now incorporated into [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

For more information see: [UKHSA update on scarlet fever and invasive Group A strep - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Winter is a time where viruses do spread and therefore we encourage good infection prevention control measures. We urge all parents and carers to:

- remind children of the importance of good respiratory and hand hygiene – by this we mean teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap for 20 seconds, and how to use a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, disposing of the tissue after use, and washing hands thereafter
- keep children off school should they feel unwell
- ensure that any child diagnosed with a GAS infection stays off school for the recommended period after starting antibiotics, that is, at least 24hrs after starting antibiotics for strep throat or 48hrs for impetigo, and is well enough to attend an early years or school setting thereafter
- remain vigilant to the signs and symptoms of GAS infection and any deterioration in your child's condition, seeking early medical help as necessary
- ensure your child is up to date with their immunisations, especially the seasonal flu vaccine as we know that flu can predispose children to more severe illness with GAS.

The higher number of GAS infections is country-wide. Nevertheless, instances of iGAS are uncommon and most infections can be managed with antibiotics.

Please be assured that we continue to liaise with the Council's Public Health team and will provide any further important updates to parents and carers as these become available. Should we suspect an outbreak of GAS infection in our setting, we will follow national guidance and work with the UKHSA health protection team to manage the situation. Where necessary, we will provide information to carers and parents to advice on any specific actions to take around any outbreaks.

Thank you for your continued support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Deborah Craddock

Head Teacher