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Loving, learning and flourishing in community

Dear All

As I am sure you will have seen on the news over recent days, there has been an increase in notifications to the UK Health and Security Agency of Scarlet Fever, group A Streptococcus (GAS).

We have been asked to pass on to you information regarding GAS, so that you can be alert to the symptoms and any actions that you should take if you think your child might have Scarlet Fever.

Scarlet Fever is a common childhood infection, which is not usually serious: it should however be treated with antibiotics to both reduce the risk of complications and the spread of the illness to others.

The early symptoms of Scarlet Fever include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. After 12 to 48 hours, the characteristic red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, and 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. Patients typically have flushed cheeks and be pale around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a bright red 'strawberry' tongue.

If you think you, or your child, might have Scarlet Fever you should contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible and then stay at home (away from nursey, school or work) for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment.

The same bacteria that causes Scarlet Fever can also cause a range of other types of infection such as impetigo and a sore throat. In very rare cases, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause more serious illness. It is very rare for children with Scarlet Fever to develop a more serious infection.

There are lots of viruses that cause sore throats, colds and coughs that are currently circulating and these will almost all resolve without medical intervention.

If however you believe your child is not responding well to usual treatments for their cough and cold, if they have a sustained high temperature, or any difficulties with breathing, you should seek more urgent medical attention.

The spread of both bacterial and viral infections can be significantly reduced by good hand and respiratory hygiene. In school we have once again stepped up handwashing and would encourage you to help us in reminding your children to catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T Edwards-Grundy'.