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8 December 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

We have been made aware that 3 students in Years 8, 9 and 11 have tested positive for either Strep A or Scarlet Fever and are currently at home with medication. Of course, we are in regular contact with their families and our thoughts and well wishes are with them all. We are also liaising with the local health protection team to ensure all official guidance is followed.

Clearly it would not be right for us to share an individual's medical information, but we do want to let you know what the school is doing in response and provide you with some further information. The health and welfare of our students is and will always remain our greatest priority.

In order to help prevent the general spread of germs in school, we will be reintroducing some sensible measures practised during Covid around respiratory, cough and hand hygiene (see below).

### **Reducing the spread of germs in our school**

Respiratory and cough hygiene. The old saying of "coughs and sneezes spread diseases" is a reminder of the importance of the following basic measures:

- cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, dispose of used tissue in a waste bin and clean hands (bins, with lids, are provided in each classroom);
- cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) if no tissues are available, rather than into the hand;
- keep hands away from your eyes, mouth and nose after sneezing or coughing.

### **Hand hygiene**

- Wash hands more frequently with warm water and liquid/foam soap, as well as after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Use hand sanitizer gel if it is difficult to wash with soap and water.

### **Cleaning routine**

We will be increasing the frequency and intensity of cleaning around common touch points, such as table tops, handles and taps.

### **Symptoms and what to look for**

The official guidance for Strep A is developing but the information on scarlet fever can be found on the [NHS](#) and [UK Health & Security Agency](#) websites, 'Scarlet fever 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.'

***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'. Early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications.***

**Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:**

- your child is getting worse.
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal.
- 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 child is showing [signs of dehydration](#) or where relevant has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more.
- 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.

**Complications to be aware of**

Children who have had **chickenpox** recently are more likely to develop a more serious infection during an outbreak of scarlet fever and so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately.

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

In line with the current official guidance, we request that any student who is confirmed to have Strep A stay at home until 24-hours after antibiotic treatment has started and please inform the school ASAP. Otherwise, your child would be expected to attend school as normal.

We have also been requested by the South London Health Protection Team to forward the attached information to our Parents/Carers. Please read it carefully.

We hope this information is helpful and we will of course keep you updated of any developments or new official guidance.

Yours sincerely

**Mr D Evans**  
**Headteacher**

Attachment:

Letter to Parents from The South London Health Protection Team 08.12.22