



Phoenix St. Peter Academy

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Dear Parents / carers,

Scarlet Fever Information

As you may well have seen in the press there have been several Streptococcus-A infections reported across schools nationally. Unfortunately, today we have had one confirmed case of Scarlet Fever in Year 1. We want to provide some information to ensure your child's safety and to inform you of actions we are taking at school to help minimise the risk to your child. It must be stressed that serious complications associated with Streptococcus are very rare, but we still need to be vigilant. Please do familiarise yourself with the guidance below.

What is Streptococcus and what is the risk?

Streptococcus (shortened to: Strep) is a bacteria. Group A causes scarlet fever. These bacteria are also the cause of Strep throat. Scarlet fever is a contagious bacterial infection that causes flu-like symptoms and a rash that feels rough. It mostly affects young children.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is highly infectious. Therefore, look out for symptoms in your child, which include:

- 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.



What to do if you suspect your child has Strep A

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of Scarlet Fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection. 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. Please use the school's normal reporting process to report absences, please let us know specifically if you have received a positive diagnosis with Strep A.

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.



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Keeping children and staff safe at school

It is not necessary to keep children off school for any duration after the first 24 hours after they start antibiotic treatment, unless advised otherwise by a medical professional. In school we are taking proactive measures to limit the risk of spread, this includes:

- We model good hand and respiratory hygiene with staff and children with soap and anti-bacterial gel. Using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, with lidded bins.
- We are still keeping good ventilation of classrooms with doors and windows open.
- We have a robust cleaning programme in place that has been reviewed, taking into account common touch point areas and areas of high traffic.
- We will notify parents / families of any concerns and act quickly to get support.

We understand this is a concerning situation, which is attracting a lot of press attention. We wanted however to stress the fact that serious complications with Strep A are very rare and we are acting as fully and robustly as we can to ensure the safety of all your children and staff at school.

Further support and guidance

For further information please visit the NHS web site below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Matthew Jordan
Executive Headteacher