



Bickley Primary School

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6th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Scarlet Fever / Strep

As you would have seen in the news, there has been a rise in the number of cases of scarlet fever in children recently. The following is government advice:

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. 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.

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.

I will be attending a Local Authority briefing on this on Thursday and will feed back the information to staff.

At this time of year, we often have increased numbers of children with coughs, colds, tummy bugs, etc. I would like to reassure you that we are continuing to maintain high hygiene standards and make sure that children wash their hands regularly. We still have hand sanitiser dispensers throughout the school and teachers are asked to open classroom windows during play time and lunch time to ventilate the room. If parents are able to donate a bottle of anti-bacterial hand wash for your child's classroom, we would be very grateful.

Please continue to send your child to school if they have a mild cold but if they have a tummy bug, please make sure they remain at home for 24 hours after the last bout of sickness / diarrhoea.

Many thanks for your continued support.

E. Blake



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