



# Biddenham

International School & Sports College

Principal: Mr David Bailey

Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

9th December 2022

Dear Parents / Carers,

## **Scarlet Fever and Group Strep A Infections**

The Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan, is closely monitoring the increased cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) and scarlet fever. As a Department, they are working closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), who are leading on the response.

UKHSA is reporting an increased number of cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) compared to normal at this time of year. There is no evidence that a new strain is circulating and the increase is most likely related to high amounts of circulating bacteria and social mixing.

### **What are scarlet fever and Strep A?**

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called Group A streptococci (Strep A). The bacteria usually cause a mild infection that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

In very rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS).

### **What are the symptoms of Strep A/scarlet fever?**

Strep A infections can cause a range of symptoms that parents should be aware of, including:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- 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 a child becomes unwell with these symptoms, please contact your GP practice or contact NHS 111 (which operates a 24/7 service) to seek advice.

If a child has scarlet fever, the advice is for the child to stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

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We encourage parents to trust your own judgement and if your child seems seriously unwell call 999 or go to A&E if:

- a child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when a child breathes
- a child's [skin, tongue or lips are blue](#)
- a child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake.

### How to help prevent Strep A?

To prevent the spread of Strep A, UKHSA advises children, young people and staff to implement good [hand and respiratory hygiene](#) practices.

For more information visit the UKHSA [website](#) or the [Education Hub](#).

Resources will be made available in due course on the [online resource centre](#).

Yours faithfully



Mr D Bailey

Principal



Ms E Grylls

Head of School