



Westwood First School,
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Headteacher: Mrs V. Woollacott

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Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Scarlet Fever

We have two cases of scarlet fever in school. If your child has symptoms of scarlet fever (please see below), please take him/her to the doctor so that the doctor can say whether or not it is scarlet fever and give antibiotics if needed.

Exclusion Period

If your child does have scarlet fever they will need to stay off school until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment. If they don't have take any antibiotics, they will be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks and will need to stay off school for this period.

Scarlet Fever Symptoms

Scarlet fever (sometimes called scarlatina) is a bacterial illness caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*, or group A streptococcus (GAS). It mostly affects young children. A wide variety of bacteria and viruses can cause tonsillitis and other throat infections. Most are caused by viruses but streptococci bacteria account for 25 to 30% of cases. It produces toxins (poisons), which cause a rash.

Symptoms vary but in severe cases there may be high fever, difficulty swallowing and tender enlarged lymph nodes. The rash develops on the first day of fever, it is red, generalised, pinhead in size and gives the skin a sandpaper-like texture and the tongue has a strawberry-like appearance. Symptoms may present differently dependent on the skin tone.

The scarlet fever rash may be confused with measles. The fever lasts 24 to 48 hours. Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness but is rarely complicated by ear infections, rheumatic fever which affects the heart, and kidney problems.

Scarlet fever is highly infectious and is spread by close contact with someone carrying the bacteria. The incubation period is 2 to 5 days. Coughing, sneezing, singing and talking may spread respiratory droplets from an infected person to someone close by. Droplets from the mouth or nose may also contaminate hands, eating and drinking utensils, toys or other items and spread to others that use or touch them, particularly if they then touch their nose or mouth.

At school, we will continue to emphasise good hygiene practices (hand washing, cleaning touch points etc) and covering mouths when coughing/sneezing. If anyone has an open wound (cuts / grazes/ scabbed chicken pox) the wounds must be covered.

Yours sincerely

Mrs V Woollacott
Headteacher



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