



**The South Wolds  
Academy  
and Sixth Form**

8<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

The UK Health Security Agency has informed schools and other educational settings of an increase in notifications of scarlet fever to the UKHSA, above seasonal expected levels and you may have seen this reported in the media over the past few days. I understand that this may cause concern and thought it would be helpful to share key information with you regarding this matter. I must make it clear that there is no outbreak of this at South Wolds at present.

### **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, parents should contact their GP practice or contact NHS 111 (which operates a 24/7 service) to seek advice.

### **What should parents do if the symptoms become more serious?**

Parents should trust their 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

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### **What can parents do to help prevent Strep A?**

The UK Health Security Agency advises students to implement good hand and respiratory hygiene practices and your reiteration of these at home to your child would be very helpful.

### **What does this mean for attendance at school?**

If your child is well and not showing symptoms of Strep A then they should attend school:

- School is following the UKHSA guidance and there is no reason for students who are well to miss school;
- If your child does have Strep A/Scarlet Fever then they should stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of the antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others;
- If your child is particularly anxious about this please do not keep them off school – instead please contact our student support team who will work with you to support your child attending school.

**Parents must report to school if their child is displaying symptoms or has been diagnosed by a health professional.** This is very important so that we can monitor cases, if any, which occur with children who attend the school.

I have also attached some further information for you regarding Strep A and scarlet fever.

As a response, South Wolds is sharing key messages with all students on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December, including a reminder of ways to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene. There continues to be hand sanitiser and tissues supplied in every classroom for all students to use, in addition to soap and water in the toilet areas across the site and we will reiterate these messages in assemblies and through student notices.

All first aiders have been aware of the symptoms and know what steps to take if a child is displaying them. We have put in place systems that will enable us to monitor the number of confirmed cases in the school and we will contact the local health protection team for advice if we believe there is an outbreak in the school. If the health protection team do identify an outbreak then we will follow their advice and contact parents.

Please do be reassured that we are implementing the UKHSA guidance and will continue to work with the local health protection team should any cases be reported. Our priority is to ensure that we keep school safe so that all students can continue to attend and I am confident that we can achieve this by working sensibly together.

Yours sincerely



Halina Angus  
Head Teacher