

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Scarlet Fever

Scarlet fever is an infection caused by bacteria and usually occurs after a throat or skin infection with streptococcus.

Scarlet fever is also known as scarletina, although this term is sometimes used to refer to a mild form of the disease. It affects children, mostly between four and eight years old but people of any age may catch it, although it's very rare in children under two. Scarlet fever can be contracted through bacteria in airborne droplets from coughs and sneezes.

It takes around two to four days to develop symptoms. The characteristic symptom of scarlet fever is a fine pinkish-red rash on the body that feels like sandpaper. It may start in one place, but spread to many parts of the body, commonly the ears, neck, chest, elbows, inner thighs and groin. The rash does not normally spread to the face, but the cheeks become flushed and the area just around the mouth stays pale. The rash will turn white if you press a glass on it. Other symptoms may include:

- headache,
- swollen neck glands,
- loss of appetite,
- nausea and/or vomiting,
- abdominal pain,
- pastia lines (broken blood vessels in the folds of the body e.g. armpit, causing red streaks),
- white coating on the tongue which peels a few days later leaving the tongue looking red and swollen (known as strawberry tongue), and
- a general feeling of being unwell.

Parents and carers of children who may have scarlet fever should consult their GP or Health Centre.

To help prevent the infection spreading, it is important to keep pupils who have scarlet fever away from school for at least 24 hours after treatment has commenced although some children will take several days to recover before they are well enough to attend school again. Further information may be obtained from the NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Scarlet-fever/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Please ensure we have your up to date contact details in case there is a need to contact you quickly.

With thanks, Lynne