

Bunbury Aldersey CE Primary School

School Lane, Bunbury, CW6 9NR

01829 260524 or 261332

RCSAT Executive Headteacher: Mrs Nicola Badger

Principal: Mrs Nicola Badger

Deputy Principal: Miss Charlotte Hickson

principalbunbury@rcsat.cheshire.sch.uk deputyprincipal@rcsat.cheshire.sch.uk

admin@bunburyaldersey.cheshire.sch.uk



5th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware from the media there have been a small number of very serious infections from Strep A bacteria. Strep A can cause a range of health issues, including the skin infection impetigo, strep throat and scarlet fever. The vast majority of infections are relatively mild, but the bacteria can also cause a life-threatening illness called invasive group A streptococcal (iGAS) disease.

This letter is not designed to panic parents and is instead to raise awareness of the early signs and symptoms of Strep A so that early help and treatment can be sought, through **a course of antibiotics**. Whilst the frequency of iGAS is extremely low we have seen a number of cases in school this year of scarlet fever, impetigo and strep throat.

What is Strep A?

Strep A (Streptococcus A) is a bacteria that is found in the throat on skin. Many people carry this harmlessly without symptoms, but they can spread it onto others who may become ill.

How is it spread?

Similar to other infections, it can be spread through close contact with others and through instances such as coughs and sneezes.

We appreciate that there are a number of coughs and colds around also and for some children they may also present with a sore throat as part of a viral infection. Please can we ask that you are extra vigilant with symptom spotting and seek medical assistance should you have any concerns.

Strep Throat

In general, strep throat is a mild infection, but it can be very painful. The most common symptoms of strep throat include:

- Sore throat that can start very quickly
- Pain when swallowing
- Fever
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus
- Petechiae — pronounced pi-TEE-kee-eye — on the soft or hard palate (tiny, red spots on the roof of the mouth)
- Swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck

Other symptoms may include a headache, stomach pain, nausea, or vomiting — especially in children.

Scarlett Fever

In general, scarlet fever is a mild infection. Illness usually begins with a fever and sore throat. Swallowing may be painful.

- Very red, sore throat
- Fever (101°F or higher) or chills
- Whitish coating on the tongue early in the illness
- "Strawberry" (red and bumpy) tongue
- Red skin rash that has a sandpaper feel
- Bright red skin in the creases of the underarm, elbow, and groin
- Swollen glands in the neck



Other general symptoms:

- Headache or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain

Children should remain absent from school for at least 24 hours after the 1st dose of antibiotics for Scarlet Fever

Impetigo

In general, impetigo is a mild infection that can occur anywhere on the body. It **most often affects exposed skin**, such as

- Around the nose and mouth
- On the arms or legs

Symptoms include red, itchy sores that break open and leak a clear fluid or pus for a few days.

Next, a crusty yellow or “honey-coloured” scab forms over the sore, which then heals without leaving a scar.



Children should remain absent from school for at least 48 hours after the 1st dose of antibiotics for Impetigo

When is Strep A dangerous?

Strep A can be very dangerous and even fatal, hence the news coverage currently. Severe illness can come when the bacteria get into parts of the body that are usually free from bacteria such as the lungs, blood or muscles. This is called **invasive Group A Streptococcal disease** and requires urgent medical attention.

Signs of invasive Group A Strep: Symptoms can include:

- A fever
- Severe muscle aches
- Localised muscle tenderness
- Redness at the site of a wound

Parents are best placed to identify where their children are seriously ill as parents know what is normal and not normal for their child. Parent intuition is also very good at identifying where there is a problem.

Other measures

Practising good hand hygiene, particularly before eating and following trips to the toilet, are incredibly useful at minimising risk of infections from all sorts of bacteria. I ask that parents remind children of how to wash hands properly with soap and hot water; this will also be reinforced at school alongside regular access to hand sanitiser. The vast majority of Strep A infections can be routinely treated with antibiotics, and incidents of invasive Group A Strep are thankfully rare. However, it is only right given the prominence of a rise in cases that we notify parents of what to look out for regarding symptoms as early detection and treatment is vitally important. Should you have any concerns regarding the above, please don't hesitate to contact a member of staff who will be happy to assist you. Further information can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-update-on-scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep>

As always, many thanks for your support of school.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nic Badger".

Nic Badger
School Principal
Executive Headteacher for RCSAT