

Dear parents and carers,

7th December 2022

'Strep A' and Scarlet Fever

I am writing with some advice around a bacteria and associated illnesses which you have seen covered in the news in recent days called Strep A, which is related to Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever and Group A strep.

There have not been any cases of strep throat, scarlet fever or Group A strep at the academy, but we wanted to share information about the illness with you so that you can be aware of the symptoms.

Information about 'Strep A'

Strep A is a common bacteria found in our bodies that can infect the throat and tonsils, and this infection is called Strep Throat. Strep Throat is normally a mild infection but it can be painful.

The bacteria are very contagious and so could spread quickly, which is why it is important that we are aware of the symptoms. The symptoms of Strep Throat are:

- Sore throat that can start quickly
- Pain when swallowing
- Fever (if a child has a fever of 38 degrees or more, we advise them to be kept off school <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fever-in-children/>)
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus
- Tiny, red spots on the roof of the mouth (the scientific name is petechiae)
- Swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck

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

If someone with Strep Throat also has a rash, it is known as Scarlet Fever. The rash is usually pink or red with a sandpapery feel. It can be more difficult to detect visually on darker skin but will still have the sandpapery feel to it.

In very rare situations, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause a serious illness called invasive Group A strep. While still uncommon, there has been an increase in cases in children under 10 this year.

Precautions and how to seek help

Being aware of the symptoms is important as is maintaining good hygiene both at the Academy and at home including handwashing with soap and using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes.

The latest guidance from the NHS is here:

- Sore throats (and Strep Throat) <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat/>
- Scarlet Fever <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>
- Group A Strep <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-update-on-scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep>

We do need to remember these are common illnesses but there is the potential for it to become more serious, so do contact NHS 111 or your doctor if you think your child seems seriously unwell.

Yours sincerely,

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