

# Horn Park School

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**Head Teacher:** Zoe Crosland

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Dear Parents and Carers

You may be aware from the media that the UK is seeing a high number of Group A strep cases this year. The bacteria usually cause a mild infection which can lead to sore (strep) throats, impetigo or scarlet fever, that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is very infectious. Symptoms to look out for include a **sore throat, headache, and fever**, along with a fine, **pinkish or red body rash** with a sandpapery feel. These often start on the back of neck or elbow. On darker skin, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications. If your child has scarlet fever, **keep them at home until at least 24 hours** after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

In very rare circumstances, these bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause serious illness – called invasive Group A strep (iGAS). This is still uncommon.

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement. Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many bugs. By continuing to emphasise the importance of washing hands thoroughly with soap for 20 seconds and using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up or spreading infections.

As a school, we continue to ensure good hygiene measures are in place to minimise any spread, such as children washing hands regularly throughout the day. If you have any concerns you would like to talk through, please give the office a ring who can direct you to a member of the leadership team.

Zoe Crosland  
Head Teacher