

Westfields Infant School

School Lane, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 6NN



Telephone: 01252 873603 **Fax:** 01252 890832

Headteacher: Mrs Janette Teague

Website:- www.westfields-inf.co.uk

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Dear Parent /Guardian, and/or staff,

We have been informed that a few children who are in Year 1 have been diagnosed with suspected **scarlet fever and/or chickenpox**. Where both diseases are circulating at the same time there is a slight increased risk of more serious infection.

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is a mild and common childhood illness that most children catch at some point. It causes a rash of red, itchy spots that turn into fluid-filled blisters. They then crust over to form scabs, which eventually drop off. To prevent spreading the infection, keep children at home for at least five days from the onset of rash and until all blisters have crusted over.

For most children, chickenpox is a mild illness that gets better on its own. But some children can become more seriously ill and need to see a doctor. Contact your GP straight away if your child develops any abnormal symptoms, for example:

- If the blisters on their skin become infected
- If your child has a pain in their chest or has difficulty breathing

Scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is also a mild childhood illness but unlike chickenpox, it requires antibiotic treatment. Symptoms include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth.

If you think your child has scarlet fever, you should:

- consult your GP (please remember to take this letter with you) or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible.
- make sure that your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor.
- Keep them at home, away from nursery, school or work until **at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment**, to avoid spreading the infection.

Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)

The same bacteria which cause scarlet fever can also cause a range of other types of infection such as skin infections (impetigo) and sore throat. In very rare cases, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive group A strep (iGAS). Whilst still very uncommon, there has been an increase in iGAS cases this year, particularly in children under 10 years old. It is very rare for children with scarlet fever to develop iGAS infection.

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As a parent, 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 has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- 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
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

You can find more information on scarlet fever on the attached factsheet and on **NHS choices:** www.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely

Janette Teague

Janette Teague
Headteacher