



**Changing Lives
Learning Trust**

RESPECT · RESILIENCE · ACHIEVEMENT · OPPORTUNITY



Our Ref: AD/CB/0055

12th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have heard that there is currently an unusually high number of cases of scarlet fever nationally.

Thankfully, we have had very few cases of scarlet fever at West Lakes Academy this term. However, it is important that we remain vigilant so that we can reduce the spread of this illness as far as possible. This letter contains information about scarlet fever and other related illnesses such as Strep A.

If your child is not well enough to attend the academy, please ensure that you report their absence by phoning the academy student absences line or email attendance.wla@westlakesmat.org.uk. You may find this resource helpful in deciding whether they are well enough to attend: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-a-z/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/)

If your child has a confirmed case of scarlet fever, chicken pox or strep A, please let us know.

Scarlet Fever

Scarlet fever is an infection caused by Group A streptococcus (GAS). GAS is very common. Lots of us carry the bacteria in our throats and on our skin and it doesn't always result in illness. However, GAS can cause a number of mild infections, such as tonsillitis, scarlet fever and impetigo.

GAS can occasionally cause more serious infection, but this is rare. The most serious infections linked to GAS come from invasive group A strep, known as iGAS. These infections are caused by the bacteria getting into parts of the body where it is not normally found, such as the lungs or bloodstream.

Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

The early symptoms of scarlet fever include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. After 12 to 48 hours the characteristic red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, and giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture. The scarlet rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present. Children typically have flushed cheeks and pallor around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a 'strawberry tongue'. As the child improves peeling of the skin can occur.

Principal: Abby Deeks

West Lakes Academy, Main Street, Egremont, Cumbria CA22 2DQ

Part of Changing Lives Learning Trust

t: 01946 820356 e: contactus.wla@changinglives.education w: www.westlakesacademy.org.uk



Actions to take

Children with suspected scarlet fever should not attend school until 24 hours after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment for scarlet fever.

Whilst scarlet fever is circulating it is especially important that any children with chickenpox stay off school until all their blisters have dried over, which is at least 5 days after they first appeared.

Dr Ranj Singh, in partnership with the NHS and UK Government, has produced a video that talks about Strep A. It explains that serious illness as a result of a Group A Strep infection is very uncommon and also provides practical advice on helping children to take antibiotics. The video can be found here: [Strep A information with Dr Ranj Singh - YouTube](#)

Should the siblings or close contacts of people diagnosed with scarlet fever stay at home?

No, there is no need for the siblings or close contacts of cases to stay at home. Of course, if any close contacts develop symptoms such as a high temperature and vomiting (or generally feel too unwell to attend their school or childcare setting) then they should stay at home. If you are concerned that your child has symptoms of scarlet fever, you should contact their GP or NHS 111.

Further guidance

More information about scarlet fever can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scarlet-fever-symptoms-diagnosis-treatment>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

Group A Strep – what you need to know: [Group A Strep - What you need to know - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

I hope that you find this information helpful.

Yours faithfully,



Abby Deeks
Principal

Principal: Abby Deeks
West Lakes Academy, Main Street, Egremont, Cumbria CA22 2DQ
Part of Changing Lives Learning Trust

t: 01946 820356 e: contactus.wla@changinglives.education w: www.westlakesacademy.org.uk

