

13<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have been informed that a small number of children in school / nursery have been diagnosed with suspected scarlet fever, measles or chickenpox.

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others.

Both measles and chickenpox are also usually mild illnesses that clear up without any specific treatment but in both cases symptoms can be relieved with pain killers such as paracetamol for pain relief and high temperatures, getting plenty of rest and ensuring your child stays hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.

## Symptoms

### Scarlet Fever

The symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. This is 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.

### Measles

Measles starts with cold-like symptoms that develop about 10 days after becoming infected. This is followed a few days later by the measles rash. For most people the illness lasts around 7 to 10 days in total. The initial symptoms of measles can include a runny or blocked nose, sneezing, watery eyes, swollen eyelids, sore, red eyes that may be sensitive to light, a high temperature, small greyish-white spots in the mouth, aches and pains, a cough, loss of appetite, tiredness, irritability and a general lack of energy.

### Chickenpox

Chickenpox is commonly recognised by its spotty blistering red rash that can cover the entire body. The spots normally appear in clusters and tend to be: behind the ears, on the face, over the scalp on the arms and legs but can be anywhere on the body. The rash starts as small, itchy, red spots that develop into a blister on top and become intensely itchy after about 12-24 hours.

## Returning to school:

Once the antibiotics have been started to treat scarlet fever children can return after 24 hours if they are well enough.

Children who have been diagnosed with measles should stay home for about 4-5 days after the first appearance of the rash.

In the case of chickenpox, children can return to school once the blisters have dried and are starting to scab over. This can take between 5-10 days.

If you think you, or your child, has any of the above illnesses see your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible.

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

Yours sincerely,

Avnish Dhesi  
Head of School