



06/02/2019

Dear parent / guardian,

Re: Recent Chickenpox cases in school

We have been informed that a number of children who attend St Marys Primary School have recently been diagnosed with chickenpox. This letter offers some further information and advice which you may find useful.

Chickenpox is usually a mild illness and children usually get better by themselves. Children with chickenpox should stay off school for five days from onset of rash and until all the lesions have crusted over. Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Chickenpox/>.

On occasion chickenpox may be complicated by a secondary bacterial infection. Signs and symptoms of this can include:

- a persistent high fever
- the skin around chickenpox blisters becoming red, hot or painful (signs of infection)
- joint pain and swelling
- your child's symptoms not improving or getting worse.

Children who have had chickenpox **recently** may develop complications if they also catch scarlet fever. Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection that is treated with antibiotics. Symptoms 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'.

Children with scarlet fever should stay off school for at least 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection. Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Scarlet-fever/>.

If you are concerned about any of the symptoms above, please seek medical assistance promptly. 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.

General hygiene advice

Please encourage your child to wash their hands frequently with warm water and soap, particularly after using the toilet, after using a tissue to catch a cough or sneeze, and before eating. Particular care should be taken when handling nappies or tissues.

If you are concerned about any of the information in this letter or would like to discuss it further, please contact my team on 0300 303 8596 (option 1).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Dolan', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr Gayle Dolan
Consultant in Health Protection