**Letter for parents/guardians**

Dear parent / guardian,

We have been informed that several children who attend ??? School/nursery have been diagnosed with scarlet fever. Scarlet fever mostly affects young children.

Parents should remain vigilant for symptoms. Symptoms vary but in severe cases there may be high fever, difficulty swallowing and tender enlarged lymph nodes. The rash develops on the first day of fever, it is red, generalised, pinhead in size and gives the skin a sandpaper-like texture and the tongue has a strawberry-like appearance.

Scarlet fever is spread by close contact with someone carrying the bacteria. The incubation period is 2 to 5 days.

Please encourage your children to continue with good hand hygiene, washing them regularly with soap and water and the covering of the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

If your child appears unwell, they will be sent home.

If they have been diagnosed with scarlet fever, they will be allowed to return to their education or childcare setting 24 hours after they start appropriate antibiotic treatment and are well enough to do so.

If you are concerned about 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.

Children who have had **chickenpox** recently are more likely to develop more serious infection during an outbreak of scarlet fever and so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately.

Further information can be found at:

Scarlet fever: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

Yours faithfully