

EM WL 9.12.22

Dear parent/carers,

Strep A announcement from Warrington Borough Council:

Warrington's public health team is urging people to be aware of the signs and symptoms of Group A Strep to help prevent the spread of the infection. There have been a higher number of cases of Group A Streptococcus (Strep) than usual this year, and parents may be concerned about recent media headlines. It is important to be aware of the signs and symptoms and how to prevent the spread of infection to protect yourself and others this winter.

Group A Strep is a bacteria found in the throat and on the skin, and it can be passed from one person to another through sneezing, kissing, and skin contact. In most people it does not cause any symptoms, but it can make others seriously ill. Breaks in the skin, such as surgical wounds, or cuts can also provide an opportunity for the bacteria to enter the body and cause infection. Most Group A Strep infections are relatively mild illnesses such as sore throat, scarlet fever, impetigo (a crusted skin infection usually around the mouth that often affects children), or cellulitis (an infection causing redness of the skin). These infections may require antibiotics. In rare circumstances, Group A Strep can cause severe diseases called invasive Group A Strep disease.

Anyone can become infected with Group A Strep. However, people with long-term illnesses like cancer, diabetes and kidney disease, and those who use medications such as steroids, are at higher risk for invasive disease. Invasive Group A Strep infection occurs when the bacteria gets past the body's natural defences and enters parts of the body where it is not usually found, such as the blood, muscles, or lungs. Symptoms of invasive disease can include fever (a high temperature above 38°C), severe muscle aches, localised muscle tenderness, and redness at the site of a wound.

It is important that parents, and people at higher risk, are on the lookout for symptoms and seek medical help as quickly as possible, so that the patient can be treated, and the infection stopped from becoming more serious. As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement. Contact NHS 111 or call your GP practice 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 three months and has a temperature of 38°C, or is older than three months and has a temperature of 39°C 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

Thara Raj, Warrington's director of public health, said: "For the last two winters, we have all been on high alert for COVID-19 and have changed our behaviours to help make sure we stay safe. We have seen a reduction in the number of cases of other winter respiratory illnesses, such as flu, largely due to our improved health habits. We know how to help combat group A Strep infection - there are

four simple things we can do this winter to help prevent the spread of bugs and diseases. Let's keep washing our hands, sanitising surfaces, covering our mouths when we cough or sneeze, and keeping a distance when we feel unwell. It sounds so simple but washing your hands with soap and warm water is one of the easiest ways to prevent yourself and others from catching illnesses like flu, norovirus, the common cold and Group A Strep. We need everyone to remember that it is still important to take these small steps to reduce the spread of infection. It's the simple things that really do mean a lot!"

For more information about symptoms of Group A Strep and associated illnesses, visit:

Scarlet fever: Scarlet fever – NHS (nhs.uk)

Impetigo: Impetigo – NHS (nhs.uk)

Cellulitis: Cellulitis – NHS (nhs.uk)

The UKHSA website: Group A Strep – what you need to know (blog.gov.uk)

Further information about the Simple Things campaign can be found at simplethings-nhs.com.

School Show

We have had our school show 'Annie' on all week – and it has been absolutely fantastic! We had some local primary schools in during the week so years 5 and 6 could watch the matinee performances, and then a full house each night. It takes a lot of work from staff and students to put together such a professional performance, and we are very proud of all of them.

Attendance

Our school attendance remains a concern at 91.2% this week, we need to make sure that students are still attending school if they have a bit of a cold and nothing more serious than that, if possible, please.

Christmas Kindness Day

We have all of our students in Christmas clothes today and elf hats have been given out on the gates this morning. Each year group has one period in the day to access our Christmas event, completing the elf run and then visiting the Christmas Markets and getting a hot chocolate. All money raised will go to St Rocco's – there will be plenty of photographs on our social media later on so please do have a look!

Christmas Break

Please remember that students finish for the holidays next Friday (16) at 12.30 and return to school on Tuesday 3 January at 09.15 (gates open at 09.00). They will go straight to period 1 as there will be no form time that day. Breakfast club will be available as usual.

Best wishes and take care,



Emma Mills
Headteacher

Dates for your Diary

School Closes at 12.30pm Friday 16 December 2022- final assembly in Tennis centre from 11.30am

School reopens at 9.15am Tuesday 3 January 2023 – student go straight to period 1

Thursday 5 January 2023 – Year 7 – 9 Nasal Flu vaccines <http://www.bwimmunisations.co.uk/>

Wednesday 18 January 2023 Year 11 and Year 13 Leavers photos

Wednesday 18 January 2023 Birchwood College Open Evening 5.30pm – 7.00pm