



Dear Parent/Guardian

We have been informed that there have been cases of both chickenpox and Group A Streptococcus (GAS) infection at the setting.

Group A Strep (GAS) Infection can cause a number of different illnesses:

Scarlet Fever - scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, however, should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others. Scarlet fever includes non-specific symptoms such as sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, **followed by a fine red 'sandpaper' like 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. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth. [Scarlet fever - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Strep Throat - this is a more severe or longer-lasting infection in the throat and tonsils. Children are likely to be more unwell generally with difficulty swallowing due to the pain.

Impetigo - this is a bacterial skin infection. It will start with red sores or blisters. These will burst quickly and leave crusty, golden-brown patches. [Impetigo - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

For more information click here [Group A Strep - What you need to know - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk)

Please remember that there are lots of viruses that cause sore throats, rashes, colds and coughs circulating at the moment. Many of these are mild and self-limiting and do not need any medical intervention

However, if you think you, or your child, may have a GAS infection:

- See your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
- Make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor.
- Stay at home, away from nursery, school, or work for **at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment (48 hours for impetigo or until all lesions have crusted over/healed)**, to avoid spreading the infection.
- Reduce the spread by practising good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Chicken Pox

Chickenpox is usually a mild and common childhood illness that most children catch at some point. It causes a rash of red, itchy spots that turn into fluid-filled blisters that crust over to form scabs. To prevent spreading the infection, **children with chicken pox should stay away from the nursery, school or playgroups for at least 5 days from onset of the rash AND until all the spots have crusted over.** Ibuprofen (Brufen, Nurofen, Calprofen) should NOT be given to children who have Chickenpox. [Chickenpox - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Some people are at higher risk from chicken pox and should contact a health professional who will assess if preventative treatment is needed:

- If you/your child is **immunosuppressed** and you are certain that you/they have been in contact with chickenpox, please contact NHS 111 or your GP as soon as possible.

- If you are **pregnant**, have not had chickenpox in the past, and are certain you have been in contact with chickenpox, please contact NHS 111, your GP or your midwife as soon as possible.
- If you are caring for a **newborn baby** and you are certain they have had contact with chickenpox please also contact your midwife, NHS 111 or your GP as soon as possible.

Complications

Children who have **chickenpox** or **influenza** at the same time as **scarlet fever** are more likely to develop more serious infection 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.

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 faithfully

Health Protection Team

UK Health Security Agency South West