



Dear parent/carer,

As we welcome all children back to school following the Christmas break, we would like to provide all parents with the advice below from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Stockport Council.

Flu and coronavirus (COVID-19) are currently circulating, and more cases of scarlet fever than we usually see at this time of year continue to be reported. By following some simple steps, we can help protect children, minimise the spread of illness in education and childcare settings and protect our wider community.

### **Reducing illness**

It's important to reduce the spread of infection in schools and other education and childcare settings as much as possible. Helping children to learn about the importance of good hand hygiene is key – particularly for younger children - so practice regular handwashing at home with soap and warm water. Catching coughs and sneezes in tissues then binning them is another simple way to help stop illness from spreading.

If your child is unwell and has a fever, they should stay home from school or nursery until they feel better and the fever has resolved. Most fevers are caused by viruses, and do not need medical treatment. Keep your child well hydrated and rested while they recover from viral illnesses.

### **Scarlet fever**

Scarlet fever is caused by Group A Streptococcus bacteria and unlike viruses, should be treated with antibiotics. The early symptoms of scarlet fever include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. After 12 to 48 hours, the characteristic red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body and giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture. The scarlet rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present. Patients typically have flushed cheeks and are pale around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a bright red 'strawberry' tongue.

If you think you, or your child, might have scarlet fever, contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible, and then make sure that you or your child take(s) the full course of any antibiotics prescribed. Although you or your child will feel better soon after starting the course of antibiotics, you must complete the course to ensure that you do not carry the bacteria in your throat after you have recovered.

## Flu

Flu vaccination is still available for all eligible groups and is the best protection against the virus. We have seen good uptake in older age groups but vaccination among young children remains low. Flu can be very unpleasant and, in some cases, can lead to more serious illness. Getting your child vaccinated protects them and those they come into contact with and it's still not too late.

Children eligible for the flu vaccine include:

- Children aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2022
- All primary school-aged children
- Secondary school children in year 7 to year 9

Parents of children in Reception to Year 9 can contact Intrahealth to arrange vaccination by calling 0333 358 3397 (Option 1 then Option 6) or email [stockportimms@intrahealth.co.uk](mailto:stockportimms@intrahealth.co.uk)

You can get more information [getting your child vaccinated against flu here](#).

Thanks and best wishes

Jenny Martin - Co-Headteacher

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