

# Appendix 1 – Group A Strep (GAS) Vigilance Letter for Parents

## Local Health & Safety Measures

Cidari | All Academies | Public

Version 1.0 Published 6th December 2022.

Dear Parent/ Carer

You will have heard updates on the news regarding an increase in cases of Group A Strep (GAS) and Scarlet fever. Whilst this news is concerning and requires vigilance and attention to the health of ourselves and our children, I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you in the hope that the following information provides you with information and reassurance.

### What is Group A Strep (GAS)?

GAS is a common bacteria which causes a range of infections including scarlet fever. These infections are usually mild.

### What is Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)

In rare occasions, this can cause a rare, more serious infection called Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS). This occurs when the GAS bacteria gets into parts of the body where it causes serious disease, like in the lungs or bloodstream.

### What should parents look out for?

It's always concerning when a child is unwell. GAS infections cause various symptoms such as sore throat, fever, chills and muscle aches.

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold, these are not symptoms of GAS. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes, unless further symptoms develop associated with GAS or iGAS, when you should seek medical attention.

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away, unless further symptoms develop associated with GAS or iGAS, when you should seek medical attention.

A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.

### When should I keep my child off school?

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement.

**A high temperature or fever** - you should keep them off school until it goes away.

**Impetigo** - They will need treatment from a GP and kept off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

**Scarlet Fever** - If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

**Vomiting and diarrhoea** - Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school for 2 days after their symptoms have gone.

### Contact NHS 111 or your GP 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 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C 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

**Call 999 or go to A&E if:**

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

There is no specific guidance for close contacts other than monitoring their own health for any of the above symptoms and seeking medical advice through 111 or their GP if required.

**Prevention**

I recognise that this news will cause you concern, however we are confident in the systems and processes we have put in place to safeguard the health and wellbeing of your children and our staff. It is vital that you monitor the health of your child and do not send them into school if they have any of the symptoms of GAS or iGAS and take the following actions to prevent transmission:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Cover open cuts or lesions with plasters or dressings

This letter is being sent as a precaution, and to make sure you have the information available from Government agencies. We will continue to monitor the latest guidance and update you as appropriate. This guidance has been taken from the UKHSA blog (<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/05/group-a-strep-what-you-need-to-know>) and NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school>).