

March 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We have been informed that a number of children who attend Harting school have been diagnosed with **scarlet fever and/or chickenpox**. We have taken advice from Public Health England who suggest that we give you some more information about these infections:

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is 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. They then crust over to form scabs, which eventually drop off. For most children, chickenpox is a mild illness that gets better on its own. But some children can become more seriously ill and need to see a doctor. Contact your GP straight away if your child develops any abnormal symptoms, for example:

- If the blisters on their skin become infected
- If your child has a pain in their chest or has difficulty breathing

Scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is also a mild childhood illness but unlike chickenpox, it requires antibiotic treatment. Symptoms include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, followed by a fine red 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, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth. As the rash fades the skin on the fingertips, toes and groin area can peel.

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever:

- 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.

Complications

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 joint pain or 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.'

Coronavirus

Main symptoms of coronavirus:

- High temperature
- New persistent cough
- Breathlessness

It is important to self-isolate if any family member develops any of these. NHS 111 website provides more details of the most up-to-date advice <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

I wish everyone well.

Take care

Fiona

Fiona Mullett

Headteacher