



Beam County Primary School
Oval Road North, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 9ED.

21st October 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

The London Region, UK Health Security Agency has recommended that we share the following important information;

We have been informed that several children who attend Beam County Primary School have been diagnosed with chickenpox and there has been a case of scarlet fever too.

We have contacted our local Health Protection team, who have provided us with the following advice to share with you.

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is a common childhood illness. 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. To prevent spreading the infection, keep children off nursery or school until all the spots have crusted over.

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

Group A Strep infections

- Most Group A Streptococcus illnesses are relatively mild, with symptoms including a sore throat ("strep throat"), scarlet fever or a skin infection such as impetigo
- If you suspect, your child has a "strep throat" or impetigo they will need to see your GP or contact NHS111 as they will require antibiotic treatment.

Scarlet fever

- Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection caused by group A Streptococcus (GAS). It is also a mild childhood illness but unlike chickenpox, 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. The face can be flushed red but pale

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around the mouth. As the rash fades the skin on the fingertips, toes and groin area can peel. On brown and black skin, it might be harder to see a change in colour, but you can still feel the sandpaper-like texture of the rash and see the raised bumps

If you think your child has scarlet fever:

- See your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible. It is also preferable that a throat swab is taken to confirm the diagnosis.
- Make sure that your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor/healthcare professional.
- Anyone with symptoms suggestive of scarlet fever should stay at home, away from nursery, school, childcare setting or work for at least **24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment**, to avoid spreading the infection.

Children who have recently had chickenpox infection are more at risk of developing 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 redness, pain or swelling. If you are concerned for any reason, then please seek medical assistance immediately.

Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)

The same bacteria which cause scarlet fever can also cause a range of other types of infection such as skin infections (impetigo) and sore throat. In very rare cases, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive group A strep (iGAS). Whilst still very uncommon, there has been an increase in iGAS cases this year, particularly in children under 10 years old. It is very rare for children with scarlet fever to develop iGAS infection.

As a parent, you should trust your own judgement.

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. Further information on scarlet fever and chickenpox are also available via the NHS website (www.nhs.uk):

[Scarlet fever](#)

[Chickenpox](#)

[Group A Strep - What you need to know - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Yours sincerely,

Miss Whittington

Headteacher