Health Protection Duty Room

12-22 Linenhall Street

Belfast

BT2 8BS

Tel: 0300 555 0119

05/12/2022

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We have been informed that a small number of children who attend Brackenagh West PS have been diagnosed with scarlet fever. Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it is commonly treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others.

The symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. This is 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.

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

- contact your GP for further advice
- 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**, to avoid spreading the infection

Complications

Children who have had **chickenpox** recently are more likely to develop more serious infection with scarlet fever and so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) or arthritis (joint pain and swelling). **If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately**.

You can find more information at https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever and further advice can also be obtained from the PHA Health Protection Team on **0300 555 0119** during office hours.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Sheridan (Consultant in Health Protection)