

Horizon Community College Plan - Managing Group A Streptococcal Infection

Introduction

Group A Streptococcal (Strep A) infections have been comparably high in the winter of the 2022-23 academic year compared with the same point in previous years. Infections of Strep A can cause scarlet fever, and in rare cases get into the bloodstream leading to invasive group A strep (iGAS), which can be very serious for young people if not treated in a timely fashion.

To ensure risk to the students at Horizon Community College is minimised, this plan sets out guidance and actions for staff, students, and visitors to follow whenever on site.

Principles

Guidance and actions in this plan are in line with the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) guidance for Managing Outbreaks and Incidents. The aim of the plan is to maintain all students' access to their normal curriculum and school day whilst ensuring that their safety and wellbeing is maintained to the highest possible standards.

Any further decisions and instruction required to further uphold this aim will be made by the Principal Team in consultation with the HCAT central team and local Public Health representation.

Processes and Expectations

To minimise risk to students of Strep A infection:

- Staff and students who wish to wear a face covering will be permitted to do so.
- The College will reinforce good hygiene practices to staff, students, and visitors.
- Staff will ensure seating plans are constantly up to date to enable, if required, the monitoring of potential interactions of students in lessons.
- The College will request that all parents and carers (or where necessary, the students themselves), notify the college of a diagnosis of Strep A infection for their child at the earliest possible opportunity.
- A child diagnosed with a Strep A infection may be advised to stay at home for at least 24 hours after they start antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection to others. In this scenario, they will be permitted to access lessons remotely to avoid learning loss. Expectations of students, parents/carers, and teaching staff in the event of a remote live lesson are set out in the Remote Education Policy on the college website.

In the event of a potential outbreak:

In the case of two or more scarlet fever cases within 10 days of each other, and if affected individuals have a link, the College is required to contact the UKHSA health protection team and obtain further advice and guidance. In the first instance, the college will undertake the following procedures:

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will make sure that all students and staff that are ill go home. They will be expected to remain at home until it is safe to return (As per national ‘Health protection in children and young people settings, including education’ guidance, children and adults with suspected scarlet fever should be excluded from nursery / school / work for 24 hours after the commencement of appropriate antibiotic treatment).• Any ill students will be placed away from others until they go home.• Employees supporting anyone ill will wear single use plastic gloves and aprons. This will be disposed of when the student or member of staff leaves site
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will notify parents and carers of the situation• We will ask that any non-urgent visitors do not visit• Depending on the severity of the outbreak/cluster, you may want to consider postpone certain college activities.• Any visitors should sanitise their hands on arrival and before they leave.
3	<p>We will remind staff and students to wash their hands throughout the day, including before and after meal times and toilet visits.</p> <p>Students will not be allowed to share drinking bottles, crockery or cutlery during this time.</p> <p>We will remind staff and students about the importance of respiratory hygiene, in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cover mouths when coughing or sneezing, making sure to wash hands afterwards.• Use disposable tissues and throw away after use
4	<p>First aid staff will make sure that all cuts, scrapes and wounds are cleaned and covered. This also applies to bites.</p>
5	<p>Cleaning staff will continue to carry out regular cleaning throughout the day, especially hand contact surfaces. They will use detergent followed by a chlorine containing disinfectant on any surface that may get touched by staff or students, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• light switches• door handles• hard toys• toilet cubicles• walls• tables <p>Carpets and soft furnishings will be vacuumed DAILY.</p> <p>Full building cleans will continue once cases have stopped.</p>
6	<p>Unless advised otherwise by UKHSA local protection teams, we will postpone visits out of setting.</p>

Education Continuity and Vulnerable Students

As also advised by UKHSA and the DFE, we will still allow all students who are not infected with Strep A to attend lessons if they're well enough to do so.

If a parent or carer insists on their child attending the setting within 24 hours of a Strep A diagnosis, the College may take the decision to refuse their attendance to protect other individuals from possible infection. The college will consider any adverse effects the child may be exposed to by enforcing the stay-at-home direction, and where necessary ensure that any agencies identified as involved in the child's safety are consulted.

Monitoring, Concerns and Complaints

The college will monitor updates from the DFE and UKHSA to ensure this plan and its outlined actions are in line with the most up to date guidance and evaluate its effectiveness in providing a safe learning environment for students.

In the first instance, issues or concerns in relation to this plan and its implementation should be raised with the Vice Principal responsible. If concerns remain unresolved, they can be raised in accordance with the college Complaints Policy.