

Newsletter from the School Medical Office

Dear Parents/Carers,

Please find following a few reminders about current medical issues and (with exams on the horizon for some!), a few timely suggestions concerning school/life balance:

Medications in School

It has come to our attention that a number of students are bringing medications to school with them in their bags. Please be aware that students on both short and long-term courses of medication are required to bring their medicines to the First Aid office for storage and for subsequent supervised administration*. This action is necessary for the safeguarding and security of students on the school premises. Please note that in following this protocol, possible sharing of medication is avoided, and, in the event of any unforeseen reaction to medication or any acute event/accident befalling a student, relevant staff members are aware of exactly what medication a student has taken, and importantly, when it was taken. If parents/carers could assist us in our efforts to make our school a safer place through helping us uphold this policy regarding medications, it would be much appreciated.



**This instruction does not apply to students who carry Epipens and/or inhalers for asthma. Students who come into this category must ensure that they carry their medication with them at all times. They should also have a spare inhaler/Epipen stored in the school medical cupboard, ready for use in the event of an emergency.*

Note especially: Paracetamol and Ibuprofen

We have some students in school who seem to be taking these medications on a regular and on-going basis. A reminder to parents that these medications, although readily available, should be used with care. As with any medication, always ensure that both Paracetamol and Ibuprofen are given strictly according to directions and are not administered on a long-term basis without first seeking advice from a healthcare professional. Please consult your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure about the appropriate level of use of these medications.



Head Lice

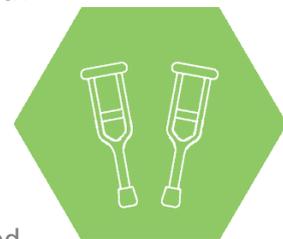
Parents/carers should always be on the look-out for this perennial problem! The school has recently had one or two cases of head lice reported, so please check your daughter's hair and scalp regularly. For advice concerning both the detection and treatment of head lice, please refer to:

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Introduction.aspx

Please note that vigilance and quick application to treatment is the key to the effective management of head lice in the school community.

A Reminder about the Use of Crutches in School

For safety reasons, the school does not supply students with crutches. Any student with an injury requiring the use of crutches should be supplied with them from an appropriate dispensing agency e.g. hospital. Such agencies are best placed to instruct patients/students in the safe and correct use of crutches. Furthermore, crutches should be used sensibly at school – not lent to friends to try out, for example. Any student with a mobility problem (temporary or longer-term) should see the medical office and an appropriate Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be organized.



Recent reported increases in cases of Scarlet fever and Chicken Pox:

PHE (Public Health England) are advising of an increased number of reported cases of Scarlet Fever and Chicken Pox. With regard to this advice, St Edmund's Girl's School medical office wishes to pass on PHE's guidance concerning 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. 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.

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 a child has scarlet fever:

- they need to see their GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
- Make sure that the 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 during an outbreak of scarlet fever and vigilance is required for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis. If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately.



Coping with Stress; Achieving School/Study/Life Balance

1. *Time Management.*

Take a look at your school/life balance and try to create a practical and realistic programme for including school study requirements within the general routine of your day. Study at times when you are feeling rested and quiet and in a space where you are less likely to get interrupted. Set realistic goals and endeavour to stay on track to achieve them. Try to balance study periods with regular breaks for relaxation and/or physical exertion – be focussed whilst you are studying, but don't be too hard on yourself. If you are worried about something, move on, you can always come back to it later.

2. *Sleep patterns.*

Try and maintain regular sleep patterns and make sure that you get sufficient sleep (7-9 hours each night). Make sure that your sleeping space is as restful and free from distraction as possible. Try meditating on calming thoughts or images as you drift off to sleep; some people find meditating on the rhythm of the breath helpful. Push aside worries as you fall asleep – concentrate on positive, happy thoughts. Studies show that lack of sleep leads to a *reduced ability to consolidate new information* (stuff you've learned during the day), as well as making individuals more vulnerable to mental health issues. Moreover, sleep deprivation not only increases levels of *stress hormones*, it also affects the levels of the hormones leptin and ghrelin, which are implicated in the process of *weight gain*!

3. *Adequate nutrition and hydration.*

Make sure that you are eating optimally. Eat regularly and include lots of fruit and vegetables in your diet. Don't dehydrate (drink at least 6-8 glasses of fluid a day – and that includes tea and coffee and low-fat milk drinks). Try and minimize highly sugared drinks – pure water does your body a lot of favours and it's free!

4. *Exercise regularly.*

Exercise not only relaxes the body, it also gets those endorphins going and endorphins make you feel good. It doesn't have to be really vigorous exercise – even a walk around the block with the dog will do.

5. *Make routine your (new) best friend!*

Establishing routines helps with time management and planning; you feel more in control. Feeling more in control helps reduce stress!

6. *Seek help.*

If you are worried about anything – seek help. Whether it's from a friend, parent, carer, teacher or anyone else you think might be able to advise you. Everyone needs help at some stage, and it can make the path forward a lot easier – don't be shy – ask.

7. *Be kind to yourself.*

Remember that as long as you try to be the best you can 'in the moment', you can give yourself a well-deserved pat on the back. We all have different strengths, which is what makes the world such an amazing place! Try your best; *be* your best and have faith that things will work out in the end! Effort and good intentions always reap rewards!

Have a happy and safe spring term and remember to keep medical office staff updated as far as your daughter's health and medications are concerned.

