

7 December 2022

Dear Students and Parents/Carers

I am writing in follow up to the tragic loss of a member of our school community and to provide an update on the action we have taken up to now, and will be taking in the future, which I hope is helpful.

I know many of you will be aware we have recently had two seriously ill students, one of whom sadly has died. As a school, as soon as we were made aware we contacted the local authority public health team and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), so we could work together to deliver appropriate public health interventions which would reduce the risk of further ill health in the wider school community.

When incidents like this happen, a team of people from across the health community and the school come together to plan and deliver the best possible response, using expertise and best practice developed over many years.

The initial information suggested the illness of the two students might have been caused by influenza (flu). As this was a possibility, one of the first interventions we were advised to put in place was to see if we could bring forward the opportunity for those at the school to get their flu vaccination earlier than had originally been planned. We were able to do that, and I want to thank everyone who has taken up that opportunity and encourage anyone who has yet to do so to consider doing it promptly.

As medical professionals have obtained greater understanding of the probable cause of the illness, the school has been recommended to take some standard public health measures, including tracing close contacts of those who have been ill, and undertaking increased hygiene measures around the school, such as deep cleaning. These measures are not uncommon with a number of infections as they help reduce the risk of onward spread of any bugs and allow anyone deemed at risk of having been infected to be checked and, if necessary, given appropriate medical interventions.

While this has been happening, you will be aware there is currently lots of information in the public domain around scarlet fever and invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS). Although this was not thought to be an issue for our ill students, the bug that causes scarlet fever is circulating in the wider community, so I thought it would be helpful to share the helpful information in this UKHSA blog <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/05/group-a-strep-what-you-need-to-know/> . This explains more about scarlet fever and iGAS. It highlights that Group A Strep is a bug that causes common illnesses including sore throats and scarlet fever, and it explains the symptoms to watch out for, as well as infection prevention advice which actually helps with most winter infections.

This has been a difficult time for the school, but a far more difficult time for the families and friends of the students involved. We hope you will respect their privacy and will support us as we try to ensure we keep the school community as safe and healthy as possible.

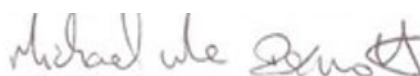
Can I thank you for your continued support and should you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,



Richard Williman

Headteacher



Mike McDermott

Associate Director of Public Health East Riding Council