

Friday 9th December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing this with less than a week to go before Christmas for our children, I do hope you are all keeping well and safe. I am providing the usual information and news below, including an update on Strep A, with the information we have.

### **Cold weather**

The weather is colder now, please ensure your children have coats in school as they will be encouraged to wear them outside. Gloves, hats and scarves are also welcomed for keeping children warm, please ensure these are named as they can be misplaced easily.

### **Young Cooks**

Please see below for some information regarding a cooking competition. If your child is interested in taking part - more information can be found at

<https://kmcharityteam.co.uk/competitions/>



## **Young Cooks**

Young people are annually invited to take part in the South East's Young Cooks cookery competition with the winners receiving a share of £500!

Some finalists will be selected to cook at a Showcase Lunch at The Dog in Wingham and may have the opportunity to attend a master class with an award winning chef.

Not just a cooking competition but a way for children to develop an understanding of the importance of food and nutrition.

This programme is a way for your school to encourage children to try new things and develop a basic life skill and, for some, a future career choice. We aren't just looking for the next Master Chef, we want all children to understand that being healthy and cooking is something they can all do!

**Closing date for entries: 31st January 2023**

**Entry requirements:**

Your entry should consist of two dishes as detailed below.

You have an overall budget of £10 to prepare your dishes for four people. You have a time limit of 2 hours in which to prepare both dishes and clear away.

**Primary**

A shepherd / cottage pie (Vegetarian acceptable)

A sponge sandwich cake with your choice of fillings / flavours

**Secondary**

A savoury pie of your choice including the pastry

A gluten free cake or dessert

**16+**

A main course of your choice

A dessert of your choice

All entries must supply:

- A list of your ingredients
- The method you used to prepare your dish
- A breakdown of the cost of preparing your dish.
- A photo of each dish you have prepared

Finalists are invited to East Kent College Broadstairs to prepare their dishes where the overall Young Cooks 2023 Champion will be selected.

## Strep A

We received the below information this week from the Department of Education, therefore I am sharing it with you. I have communicated all of the information with you over the week, but this serves as a good reminder.

We currently have one case in Leeds and Broomfield, which we have communicated to parents.

## **Scarlet Fever and Group Strep A Infections**

The Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan, is closely monitoring the increased cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) and scarlet fever. As a Department, we are working closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), who are leading on the response.

UKHSA is reporting an increased number of cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) compared to normal at this time of year. There is no evidence that a new strain is circulating and the increase is most likely related to high amounts of circulating bacteria and social mixing.

### **What are scarlet fever and Strep A?**

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called Group A streptococci (Strep A). The bacteria usually cause a mild infection that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

In very rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS).

### **What are the symptoms of Strep A/scarlet fever?**

Strep A infections can cause a range of symptoms that parents should be aware of, including:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- A fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel
- On darker skin the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel

If a child becomes unwell with these symptoms, please advise parents to contact their GP practice or contact NHS 111 (which operates a 24/7 service) to seek advice.

If a child has scarlet fever, advise they stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

Encourage parents to trust their own judgement and if their child seems seriously unwell call 999 or go to A&E if:

- a child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when a child breathes
- a child's [skin, tongue or lips are blue](#)
- a child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake.

If there are confirmed or suspected cases in an education or childcare setting, there is no reason for children to be kept at home if they are well.

### **Residential Trip**

I have heard from the children about the wonderful time they had this week. Thank you to you as parents for supporting this trip and to all the staff for their hard work to organise it. A big thanks to Mrs. Steer for leading the trip and to Mrs. Sanchez for stepping in to cover illness.

### **Christmas activities**

Please make sure you have a copy of your child's school newsletter to keep up to date of the various events, including those that may have been postponed or changed - like the Christmas dinner at Kingswood and Leeds and Broomfield.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me at [exechead@aspire-kent.org.uk](mailto:exechead@aspire-kent.org.uk)

Wishing you all pleasant weekends,

Kind regards

Emma Hickling

Executive Headteacher, Aspire Federation



