COPTHORNE
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

3rd October 2018

Dear Parents,

Threadworms
I am writing to let you know that there has been a case of threadworms in Reception. This letter will give you information about diagnosing, treating and preventing threadworms.

Threadworms are common in children
Threadworms are a very common problem, particularly in children. It is estimated that almost half of all children below the age of 10 years get threadworm at some time, but not all will have the "itching" symptoms.

What are threadworms?
Threadworms live in the bowel and around the bottom. They are tiny white worms about half an inch long that look like 'threads' of white cotton.

Are threadworms harmful?
Threadworms are generally harmless. They can cause irritation around the bottom, which can be distressing. Threadworms are generally harmless and are easily treated.

What are the signs of threadworm?
The most common sign is scratching around the bottom, particularly at night. This may be associated with disturbed sleep and irritability. The threadworms may be seen in the stools and around the bottom. Some children show no symptoms at all.

How do you get threadworms?
Threadworm eggs may be found in house dust; they stick to clothing, carpets, towels and bed linen; they can also be picked up in garden soil, on unwashed vegetable and salads, or from contact with someone who already has worms. Because the eggs are so small and so widespread it is easy for them to be swallowed. When swallowed, the eggs pass into the bowel where they hatch into worms. The female threadworm lays her eggs at night around the bottom which causes itching. Bottom scratching means eggs stick under fingernails which can then be transferred to the mouth by nail biting. Eggs can be spread to other members of the family by direct contact or via food, towels and bed linen.

What should I do if I suspect threadworms?
There is no reason to keep a child off nursery as long as the child is treated and the general hygiene measures outlined below are followed. Make sure you tell the school nurse that your child may have threadworms. Effective treatment is available from your pharmacist. It is important to treat the whole family if one person develops symptoms.

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How can I prevent threadworms?

- Keep children's nails short
- Remind children not to bite nails or suck fingers
- Ensure your child wears pyjamas or underpants in bed to prevent scratching
- Bathe daily, preferably in the morning, washing thoroughly around the bottom, and keep separate towels for each family member
- Change clothes and bed linen regularly
- Make sure everyone in the family is treated at the same time
- Wash hands after each visit to the toilet, before eating and before handling food
- Clean the toilet seat, toilet handle and door handle regularly
- Vacuum and dust bedrooms thoroughly

If you would like any further information please visit www.nhs.co.uk/threadworms.

Best wishes,



Matron