

11 December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

Measles cases have been confirmed locally in Birmingham. Measles outbreaks can happen when not enough children have been vaccinated.

Education settings are asked to pass the below information to parents and encourage them to check that their child has been vaccinated. Parents can check the personal child health record (the Red Book) or if this doesn't help, speak to their GP surgery. Parents can contact their GP surgery to catch their child up, at any age, or indeed, for themselves.

About measles

Measles is highly infectious (it can spread easily from person to person). While most people recover completely within a couple of weeks, measles can cause serious illness and in rare cases it can be fatal. Vaccination with **two doses of MMR** is the only way to give people maximum protection.

The **first signs of measles** are:

- high temperature
- runny or blocked nose
- sneezing
- cough
- red, sore, watery eyes
- rash usually appears a few days after cold-like symptoms (sometimes starts around the ears before spreading to rest of the body)

Measles can cause complications, especially in certain at-risk groups that include babies and small children, pregnant women and people with weak immunity.

FURTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The MMR vaccine

If your child has not received **2 doses of MMR vaccination** as part of their childhood immunisation programme, you should take up the offer of the MMR vaccine for your child now. If you are not sure if your child needs an MMR vaccine, you can contact your GP to check.

The MMR vaccination is the best way to protect against measles as it is:

- effective,
- safe and
- free of charge.

The vaccine provides effective protection against three diseases – measles, mumps and rubella. The first dose of MMR is given soon after the first birthday. A second dose is normally given before school entry. However, you can have the MMR vaccine at any age. If either you or your child are not fully protected against measles (two doses of MMR), you can contact your GP surgery to arrange vaccination. It is never too late to get vaccinated. Two doses of MMR are required to produce

satisfactory protection against measles, mumps and rubella. If your family avoids pork, a MMR vaccine is available that does not contain any pork products.

This is especially important when measles is circulating because any child or adult who has not had **at least one dose of MMR** and comes into contact with a person with measles will have to be **excluded from nursery, school or work for 21 days and stay at home.**

What to do if you think your child has measles

If your child develops symptoms, you should contact your GP. You must contact the surgery by telephone before visiting and tell the reception staff that you think that your child may have measles and not attend the surgery unless you are asked to. The doctor will make special arrangements to see your child so that, if they have measles, they won't pass it to others.

People with measles will remain infectious, and so be able to pass on the disease to others **for 4 days after the start of the rash.** Therefore, it is important that anyone with measles stays away from nursery, school, group activities, gatherings or anywhere with people outside of the household during that time.

Further information on the MMR vaccine can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

Yours sincerely

Sharon Lewis

Executive Head Teacher