

Via email/Wescom

To: All Headteachers

www.wirral.gov.uk

Date: 13 February 2024

Dear Headteacher,

Measles / Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine

You will have seen news stories about the increase in measles cases across the UK recently. There is an ongoing outbreak in London and the West Midlands, with a small number of confirmed cases within the Northwest. There are currently no confirmed cases of measles within Wirral. However, because measles is highly infectious and it can lead to serious consequences, we are encouraging schools to take a range of proactive actions to help prevent outbreaks, including:

1. Raise awareness of the vaccine catch-up programme

Vaccines are our best line of defence against diseases like measles and help stop outbreaks occurring in the community. Children aged between 12 months and 11 years old who have not received 2 doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) are being offered vaccination by their GP as part of a national catch-up programme. Wirral's School Aged Immunisation Service will continue to support any missed vaccinations for children in Year 7 and above. Parents and Guardians can check their child's Red Book to see if they've received MMR vaccinations as scheduled or check with their GP surgery if they are unsure.

MMR vaccination is proven to be safe, and extremely effective in protecting against measles infection. Please help to raise awareness by sending the attached letter (Appendix 1) to parents and guardians and displaying the downloadable [poster](#).

2. Encourage staff to check their vaccination status

Most healthy adults will have developed some immunity to measles but can still receive two doses of the vaccine from their GP too. Encourage staff to contact their GP to check their vaccination status and book an appointment. This will be a key measure in ensuring business continuity as unvaccinated staff who are identified as close contacts may be asked to isolate.

3. Know what to do if you are aware of a case of measles within school

Education settings should follow the [UKHSA guidance](#) on managing measles. This advises them to:

- exclude the infected individual from the setting until 4 days after the onset of the rash (where the date of the rash onset is day 0)

- encourage all children and young people over the age of one year old to have the combined MMR vaccination.
- **Contact UKHSA Health Protection Team:**

email: candmhpu@ukhsa.gov.uk

telephone: 0344 225 0562

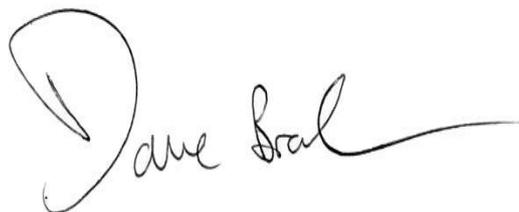
4. Know where to find further information

- The DfE Education Hub have produced a [blog](#) for parents, pupils and education professionals
- UKHSA guidance on [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#)
- UKHSA guidance on [Managing outbreaks and incidents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- UKHSA guidance on [Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z](#)
- NHS information on the [MMR vaccine](#)
- Order [free leaflets and posters](#) from HealthPublications.gov.uk

If you require any printed leaflets or posters on measles / MMR for your school, please contact the Health Protection Service: healthprotectionservice@wirral.gov.uk

Thanks for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Bradburn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Bradburn
Director of Public Health
Wirral

Appendix 1

Letter for Parents / Guardians

Dear Parent / Guardian

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has reported an increase in measles across the country and is encouraging people to check that they and their children have had two doses of the MMR vaccine. The free MMR vaccine is a safe and effective way of protecting against measles, as well as mumps and rubella.

Measles spreads very easily among those who are unvaccinated, especially in nurseries and schools. It can be a very unpleasant illness and, in some children, it can be serious and lead to hospitalisation and complications such as pneumonia, meningitis, blindness or seizures (fits). In rare cases it can cause death.

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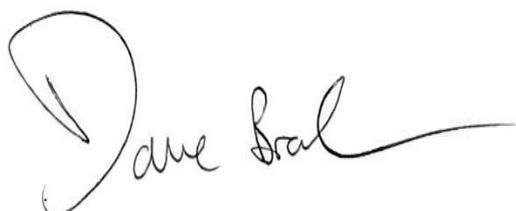
Measles symptoms to be aware of include:

- high fever
- sore, red, watery eyes
- coughing
- aching and feeling generally unwell
- a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

Anyone with symptoms is advised to stay at home and phone their GP or NHS 111 for advice.

For more information about measles, see the [nhs.uk website](https://www.nhs.uk).

Yours faithfully,



Dave Bradburn
Director of Public Health
Wirral