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Dear Parent / Guardian

Important: Measles cases are rising in the UK

Measles cases in the UK have been rising since November 2023. While Hertfordshire has seen few cases so far, we are close to London and the West Midlands where there has been a large rise in cases. The UK Health Security Agency has declared the increase in cases of measles a national incident (19 January 2024). There is the potential for cases and outbreaks in Hertfordshire as uptake of the Measles Vaccination (MMR) in the county is lower than recommended.

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that can have serious and, in rare cases, fatal consequences. Measles spreads quickly from person to person, especially in schools. Spending more than 15 minutes in direct contact with someone infected with measles is sufficient to transmit the virus. A child with measles will infect almost all unprotected children they have contact with**.**

Measles is spread through coughing and sneezing, close personal contact or direct contact with infected nasal or throat secretions. For more information about measles and the symptoms, see Measles - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Important
If you think your child has measles, they should not come into school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. Measles can spread to others easily. If your child needs medical treatment, call your GP surgery or A&E Department before you go in. You can also call 111 or get help from 111 online.

If your child is identified as a close contact of a measles case and they are not fully vaccinated, they may be asked to self-isolate for up to 21 days. Children who are close contacts and are fully vaccinated do not need to be excluded from school or childcare. Vaccination can help keep your child in school.

Call to action

As there is no medical treatment for measles, vaccination is the best protection. The MMR vaccine is safe, effective and provides long-lasting protection against three serious illnesses - measles, mumps and rubella. The vaccine is available free on the NHS. It is given in two doses, with the first offered to children at the age of one, and the second before they start school.

You can have the MMR vaccination at any age, so if you or your child has missed out on a dose, **it's not too late to catch up** and get protected.

You can check if your child has had both doses of the MMR vaccination by looking in their red book or via the NHS app. If your child has missed their first or second dose of MMR vaccine, then get in touch with your GP practice as soon as possible to book an appointment.

Further advice can be found here:

MEASLES - Protect yourself, protect others (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Measles - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/22/what-to-do-if-you-think-your-child-has-measles-and-when-to-keep-them-off-school/

Yours sincerely

S. C Perman

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