



ST JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Jesus light our way on our faith journey. Be our guide,
our joy and hope, as we learn, live, love and pray together"

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A St. Teresa of Calcutta
Multi Academy Company
School

Friday 19th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attached to this letter is a leaflet with some important information about the increase in measles cases. Please read this – it is very important as there is currently an outbreak of Measles in Birmingham.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT IF WE DO GET A CASE IN SCHOOL AND YOUR CHILD IS NOT VACCINATED THEY WILL HAVE TO STAY AT HOME FOR 21 DAYS. These are the current regulations from the public health team, who will inform us of those children who have not received vaccinations in the event of a case within school (which must be reported to the Public Health team).

Likewise, if someone in your family has measles, or if your child comes into contact with someone with measles outside of school and they have not been vaccinated, they must stay at home for 21 days. **It is very important that you inform us of this, as we have vulnerable children and adults in school.**

If your child has not been vaccinated, please contact your GP who will arrange this for you – there are NON-GELATINE vaccinations available. Your GP will also be able to confirm whether your child has received a Measles vaccination previously.

Measles is a very serious illness which cannot be treated. It can lead to severe illness, with an estimated 20-40% of children hospitalised, according to the UKHSA. Measles can cause serious complications in children including permanent disability and sometimes even death, and particularly in people with weakened immune systems and those who are pregnant. Measles is one of the most infectious diseases in humans. On average, in communities with low protection, one person will spread the virus to 15 others - that makes it far more infectious than coronavirus.

Further information on the MMR vaccine can be found on the NHS website:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs M. Ashley,
Head Teacher.



Increase in measles cases – important information for community and faith leaders

- There is an increasing number of people in the West Midlands with measles. Most of these are young children who have not had their MMR vaccination.
- Measles is a **very infectious** disease and can spread rapidly among communities, such as playgroups, nurseries, and schools **where** people have not been fully immunised with the MMR vaccine.
- The MMR vaccine is safe for every faith. There is a type of MMR vaccine that does not contain pork gelatine, so it can be used for people who do not touch any pork products. This vaccine is available at every GP practice.
- Measles does not just affect young children – anyone who has missed their MMR vaccination can get measles.
- While most people recover completely within a couple of weeks, measles **can cause very serious illness** – sometimes leading to permanent disability or death.
- People in certain at-risk groups, including babies and small children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity are at **increased risk** of complications if they catch measles.
- In Birmingham, we reduce the risk of measles spreading by excluding children and adults from nurseries and childcare settings for 21 days if they have been in contact with someone with measles and have not had at least one dose of the MMR.
- If your child has **not had one dose of MMR vaccine** and they have been in contact with a person with measles, their nursery/school/college will **exclude them for 21 days** after contact with the infected person (time infection can take to develop).
- The **first signs of measles** are:
 - high temperature
 - runny or blocked nose
 - sneezing
 - cough
 - red, sore, watery eyes
 - rash, which usually appears a few days after cold-like symptoms (sometimes it starts around the ears before spreading to the rest of the body)

About the MMR vaccine

- The MMR vaccine is safe, free of charge, and very effective.
- MMR is part of the NHS routine childhood vaccine schedule, and protects against measles, mumps and rubella.
- There are two types of the vaccine – **one does not contain pork gelatine**, so that can be used for people who do not touch any pork products.
- **TWO doses** are needed to give maximum protection:
 - **1st dose** is given just after the child's 1st birthday
 - **2nd dose** at 3 years 4 months and certainly before children start school full time
- MMR can be given to older children, teenagers and adults if they missed their injections when they were younger.

What to do if anyone in your family is not up to date with their MMR vaccinations

- You can **make an appointment with your GP** to get up to date with MMR vaccines
- This is especially important when measles is circulating – as it is now
- If you are not sure if your child needs an MMR vaccine, you can:
 - Check your child's Red Book
 - Look at the NHS app
 - contact the GP to check
- People should also make sure they are up to date with their MMR vaccines before going to large gatherings and festivals and abroad on holiday, and before older children start college or university

What to do if you think your child has measles

- **Contact your GP by phone** for advice.
- **Please do not just turn up to your GP, walk-in centre or any other healthcare setting** without calling ahead, as **measles is very infectious** – the doctor will make special arrangements to see your child so that, if they have measles, they won't pass it to others.
- people **remain infectious until at least 5 days after the onset of the rash** – so they should stay off nursery/ school/ university/ work/ other group activities until then

If someone has been in contact with a person with measles

- Measles can take **up to 21 days** to develop (incubation period) from being in contact with a case of measles
- Anyone who has had **no doses of the MMR vaccine** and has been **in contact with a person with measles** is strongly urged not mix outside their own household for **21 days** from contact with the infectious person

For more information

- More information on measles is available on the NHS website here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>
- More information on the MMR vaccine is available on the NHS website here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>