

# Measles briefing for Schools

9th February 2024



Derby City Council

# Signs and symptoms of measles

Early symptoms of measles include:

- a cold-like symptoms such as coughing, sneezing and feeling hot.
- Then a rash develops; the rash starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body. The rash looks brown or red and can feel bumpy.
- Complications of measles can include infection of the brain membrane, blindness, and seizures (fits).
- People in certain at-risk groups including babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system, are at increased risk of complications from measles.
- Measles is a very infectious virus, each case will on average infect 15-20 others (in an unvaccinated population)



# Protection against measles

- The only protection against measles is the MMR vaccine.
- One dose of the MMR vaccine is at least 95% effective in preventing clinical measles and 92% effective in preventing spread of measles to people in your household.
- The MMR vaccine is free, safe, and effective
- There are two different types of MMR vaccine available in the UK. Some vaccines are made using pork gelatine in very small amounts. The Priorix MMR vaccine does not contain pork gelatine, this can be requested from the GP.



# Why are we worried about measles now?

- We often think of measles as a disease that no longer affects us in the UK. But it is a serious illness that can affect both children and adults if they are not vaccinated.
- Lower rates of MMR vaccination across the UK mean that measles is circulating in UK communities
- Since the autumn there have been over 300 cases of measles in the West Midlands. We know from COVID that illness often spreads to Derby from the West Midlands.
- Measles can also seriously disrupt healthcare and education. Unvaccinated close contacts of measles cases (within 2m for 15 minutes) may be asked to isolate for 21 days.



# Please encourage MMR vaccination in staff and students

- Vaccination will reduce the risk of a measles case in your school and also reduce the number of isolations required if you do get a case in your school
- Please share the letter written for parents through your usual channels
- We are producing a letter for older students, please share this
- We are producing FAQs for school staff
- We are working with GPs to ensure unvaccinated people are offered an appointment and opportunity to discuss the vaccine



# Risk assessment

- Some people are more at risk of complications of measles, this includes those who are pregnant or immunosuppressed.
- Pregnant women cannot be given the MMR vaccine, and those with immunosuppression may have reduced immune response.
- A number of educational settings in the West Midlands have been impacted by measles. Now is a good time to identify any staff particularly at risk and update any risk assessments.
- National guidance is available for pregnant women in contact with measles, but we have not received any preventative advice- we continue to seek this.
- If you identify any staff at particular risk (e.g. unvaccinated pregnant women) now is a good time to consider any preventative actions you may take depending on whether there are cases in the City, school, class etc.



# What happens if there is a measles case in school?

- When a GP suspects a case of measles, they will contact the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) who will undertake further investigation. This will include whether the child is vaccinated (making measles much less likely) and also a spit test to check for infection.
- **At the moment, we are seeing an increase in possible measles cases as you would expect, but most of these are not measles**
- **We wait for confirmation from UKHSA before any specific action is taken.**
- If there is a confirmed case in your school, UKHSA will contact you to discuss next steps. This could include contact tracing, identification of vulnerable contacts, cleaning and communications with your school community
- **If you hear from parents that there is a case of measles, or if you have concerns, please contact UKHSA on 0344 2254 524.**
- **We will be here to support you – [cct@derby.gov.uk](mailto:cct@derby.gov.uk)**



# Actions

Please:

- Share our letters- to parents and students as appropriate
- Risk assess your staff
- If you have concerns regarding possible or actual cases, please contact UKHSA on 0344 2254 524.
- For broader advice or concerns please contact us–  
[cct@derby.gov.uk](mailto:cct@derby.gov.uk)





Thanks for all your support

Any questions?

