



# Knowsley Council

Dear Headteachers

## **Are your pupils up to date with their childhood immunisations?**

I am writing to make you aware that cases of measles have been rising in England this year. At the time of writing, we are aware of community transmission within Greater Manchester, with 5 linked cases. Four of those cases have resulted in a hospital admission for the child.

Measles infection can be a serious illness which can spread rapidly. MMR vaccination is proven to be safe, and extremely effective in protecting against measles infection.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have indicated that Knowsley is at a high risk of a measles outbreak due to low MMR vaccine uptake.

I would like to remind you that the best way to make sure your pupils are protected against measles is to ensure they have received 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.

Below is a link and information which we would kindly ask is shared within your settings to inform staff of the risks of measles.

[MEASLES - Don't let your child catch it - Schools version \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611117/Measles_Schools_version.pdf)

### **Symptoms of measles**

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, followed by a rash a few days later. Some people may also get small spots in their mouth.

#### **Cold-like symptoms**

The first symptoms of measles include:

- a high temperature
- a runny or blocked nose
- sneezing
- a cough
- red, sore, watery eyes

#### **The measles rash**

A rash usually appears a few days after the cold-like symptoms. Example images are highlighted below. The rash may be harder to detect on black or brown skin:





The rash starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body. The spots of the measles rash are sometimes raised and join together to form blotchy patches. They're not usually itchy.

### **What to do if a child has measles**

**It is important to stay off nursery, school, or work for at least 5 days from when the rash first appears.**

Try to avoid close contact with babies, people who are pregnant and people with weakened immune systems.

If you suspect a pupil may have measles, please ensure they stay away from school for at least 5 days from when the rash first appears. You should also contact the local Infection, Prevention & Control Team, contact details are provided in the attached Infection Prevention & Control Guidelines for Knowsley schools. More details can also be found through the following links:

[Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-protection-in-children-and-young-people-settings-including-education)

[Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-specific-infectious-diseases-a-to-z)

I have attached a letter to circulate to parents (Appendix 1). We would also encourage teachers to advocate for MMR vaccine uptake where possible.

Appendix 2 details a short settings checklist to consider ensuring the harmful impacts of a potential outbreak are minimised.

Many thanks,

Dr. Sarah McNulty  
Assistant Executive Director,  
Public Health

Nadine Carroll  
Assistant Executive Director,  
Education and Inclusion (Interim)