

Measles Action Card: Schools Settings – Measles & MMR Immunisation Conversations with Parents

What are the signs of measles?

Measles is a highly infectious condition that can cause serious illness and in rare cases be fatal; the first signs of measles are:

- High temperature;
- Runny or blocked nose;
- Sneezing;
- Cough;
- Red, sore, watery eyes;
- A rash will usually appear a few days after cold-like symptoms (sometimes starts around the ears before spreading to the rest of the body).

Measles can cause complications, especially in certain at-risk groups that include babies and small children, pregnant women and people with weak immunity. Measles can be very serious where children could be hospitalised and in some cases can die. **The best protection against measles for children and adults is 2 doses of MMR immunisation.**

What to do if you think a child or staff member has measles?

It is vitally important any child or staff member displaying suspecting measles symptoms isolates at home with no contact with others. They should NOT go to hospitals, GP practices, pharmacies or any other health setting.

The parents should call their GP who will take them through a screening process, and if measles is suspected or identified, they will support them in a clinically safe way to ensure it is not transmitted to others. Alternatively, they can contact NHS 111, or follow advice from UKHSA.

Please ensure parents have this link to NHS information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>

How is measles treated?

There is no medical cure for measles, other than letting it run its course with some clinical intervention, so the best possible treatment is prevention through the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) immunisation when children are eligible.

If parents are unsure of their child's immunisation status they should speak to their GP who can arrange an appointment if needed to catch up with immunisations. Parents need to book their appointments for immunisations in line with the guidance.

What is the MMR vaccine?

This immunisation provides effective protection against three diseases – **measles, mumps and rubella**. This vaccine is effective, safe and free of charge. **Two doses of the vaccine are required to produce satisfactory protection.** The first dose of MMR is given soon after the first birthday. A second dose is normally given before school entry.

If a **family or individual avoids pork, an MMR vaccine is available that does not contain any pork products.** This can be requested when speaking to the GP practice.

However even if a person is not yet immunised, you can have the MMR immunisation at any age. If either a child or adult is not fully protected against measles (two doses of MMR), their parents/the adult can contact their GP surgery to arrange immunisation. It is never too late to get immunised or catch up doses.

This is especially important when measles is circulating because any child or adult who has not had **at least one dose of MMR** and comes into contact with a person with measles will have to be **excluded from nursery, school or work for 21 days.**