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Headteacher: Mrs Lucy Anderton



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Dear parents

Re: URGENT MESSAGE ABOUT MEASLES AND MMR VACCINATION UPTAKE

I am writing to inform you that there is currently a measles outbreak in Solihull affecting mainly young unimmunised children. Measles is highly infectious and we have been asked to share this message by Public Health England with parents/guardians to encourage you to immunise your children if they haven't had the vaccine.

Measles is highly infectious, it can cause serious illness and can sometimes be fatal. The symptoms are:

- high fever
- cough and/or runny nose
- red watery eyes
- red brown blotchy rash, which usually appears after a few days – usually starting on the face and upper neck before spreading across the body

Vaccination with 2 doses of MMR injections are the only way to protect children and young people. The first MMR vaccine is given to toddlers at the age of 13 months and the second at around 3 years and 4 months, before a child goes to school. It can also be given to older children, teenagers and young adults if they missed their injections when they were younger.

If you suspect that your child needs the MMR vaccination, please contact your GP practice immediately. If you suspect that your child has measles, do not send them to school.

If measles is not treated it can spread to older children, teenagers and adults who missed their MMR vaccinations.

How serious is measles?

Measles is an unpleasant illness and easily passed from one person to another. In some people it can cause complications, such as ear infection, chest infections and even pneumonia. In very rare cases some people who get measles can develop serious complications, which can be fatal.

How do you catch measles?

The measles virus lives in the nose and throat of infected people. Measles is caught through direct contact with an infected person or through the air when he or she coughs or sneezes. A person with measles can infect other people from the day before they become unwell until 5 days after the rash appears.

How is measles treated?

There is no specific treatment for measles, but measles can be prevented by a highly effective vaccine. This is part of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) immunisation programme.

What to do to avoid passing on the infection:

Limit your contacts with other people, particularly those who are:

- pregnant
- children who are under 12 months or have not had the MMR vaccine
- people who have weak immune systems
- if you have measles, do not go to school or work for 5 days from when the rash first appeared and inform your school or employer immediately

Who is at risk from complications?

Anyone can be susceptible to complications from measles; however complications resulting from measles are more likely to develop in some children, for example:

- children with a weakened immune system, such as those with leukaemia
- children with a poor diet
- children under the age of 5 years

Complications are also more likely to develop in adults who are over the age of 20
Complications of measles include:

- pneumonia
- ear and eye infections
- croup (an infection of the lungs and throat)

What if you're pregnant or planning to get pregnant?

If you are planning to get pregnant and you have not had measles yet, you should arrange with your GP to have the MMR vaccine. If you catch measles during pregnancy, it can be passed on to your baby and can be very damaging, or even fatal. Measles in pregnancy can cause miscarriage, premature labour or a baby with low birth weight. The MMR jab cannot be given during pregnancy.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Anderton
Headteacher