



Public Health and Communities Directorate

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All Headteachers for circulation to all parents

Think MEASLES

Dear Parent or Carer,

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has declared a national incident. **This means cases of measles are on the rise in England and there is a growing public health risk.**

Measles is a serious illness, with one in five children who get the disease having to be admitted to hospital for treatment. It can spread very easily among those who are unvaccinated, especially in nurseries and schools, so if you or your child have not had your MMR jab, it is vital you come forward.

There is no specific treatment for Measles and the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccination gives the best possible protection against illness. Over 99% of those who have two doses of the MMR vaccine will be protected against measles and rubella. The vaccine also provides protection against mumps, which can be very painful.

Having **both** MMR vaccinations is the best way of protecting your child, family and community from measles. MMR vaccination is given at one year of age, and at 3 years 4 months by your GP however it is never too late to catch up. **If you are unsure if your child has had both vaccinations, please refer to your children's 'red book' or contact your GP.**

There will be a vaccination offer for your child through your school nursing team in the coming weeks. If you or any other adults in your home have not had two doses of MMR please contact your GP surgery for a vaccination appointment or visit our website at www.rochdale.gov.uk/measles for details of clinics in the area.

The initial symptoms of measles:

- Resemble a cold with runny nose, cough and a slight fever
- Eyes become red and sensitive to light

As the illness progresses, children may develop:

- A high fever
- A raised red rash that usually begins on the face and spreads downwards to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet
- Small white spots inside the cheeks and lips

For some people, measles can be very serious if it spreads to other parts of the body, such as the lungs and the brain. Problems can include pneumonia, meningitis and seizures (fits).

If you think your child may have measles:

- **Call your GP or NHS111 – do not attend your GP practice or any other healthcare setting (e.g. A&E) unless told to do so, as measles spreads very easily.**
- Avoid close contact with babies, pregnant women and anyone with a weakened immune system. These people are at increased risk of severe disease from measles.
- Should a rash appear stay off nursery, school or college for at least 4 days.

For more information about measles, please visit our website: www.rochdale.gov.uk/measles.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Thompson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kuiama Thompson
Director of Public Health & Communities