

Working Together for a Healthier Future



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Old Market House
Hamilton Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 5AL

Tel: 0151 651 0011
Fax: 0151 652 2668

Dear Headteacher

intouch@wirral.nhs.uk
www.wirral.nhs.uk

Measles cases in Wirral

You may be aware that there are currently Measles outbreaks in France and bordering countries. In this country, measles cases have also increased, with 135 confirmed in the first 3 months of 2011.

As we now have two confirmed cases in a local school, I would be grateful if you could take this opportunity to remind parents and guardians of children in your school that all children who haven't had 2 doses of MMR vaccination are at risk of developing measles.

Although measles is a relatively mild illness in the majority of children, in some it can cause complications such as convulsions and meningitis and on rare occasions, can kill.

Immunisation with MMR vaccine is the safest way to protect vulnerable children and young adults against measles, mumps and rubella which are diseases that can have serious consequences for babies, young children and young adults.

Although vaccination uptake rates for MMR have been slowly increasing in Wirral, we are currently not achieving the levels we need in order to provide protection to our child population (currently only 85% of local two-year-olds have been vaccinated. Our target is to reach at least 95%).

Not all people respond adequately to a single dose of vaccine, so to ensure greater protection, children need to receive two doses of MMR. Two doses of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine offer full protection against the three illnesses. Children should receive their first vaccination at around 13 months, followed by a second dose at around three-and-a-half years of age. However, it is never too late for children to catch up if they have not been vaccinated (or have not had both doses).

MMR vaccination is available to all children and can be obtained from their GP free of charge. Parents should be advised that if they wish to discuss this further, they should contact their own doctor without delay.

I have attached a copy of a parent information sheet on measles. You may find it helpful either to send out directly to parents, or use extracts on your website etc.

Thank you for your help with this matter. Please do not hesitate to call if you require further information or support.

Yours faithfully

Fiona Johnstone
Director of Public Health



Wirral Primary Care Trust
Chairman: Mr James Kay
Chief Executive: Ms Kathy Doran