



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

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☎:

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Dyddiad / Date: 8th April 2024

Dear Headteacher

You may be aware of the widespread concern caused by ongoing outbreaks of measles in the West Midlands and other parts of England. The outbreaks have occurred in areas where vaccine uptake is low. Whilst there are currently no cases in Wales, a small outbreak in October led to around 50 children being asked to isolate and not attend school for over two weeks.

Measles is an extremely infectious and serious disease and can have serious consequences for public health and be highly disruptive to education settings.

As pupils return to school after the Easter holidays, we would like your support to deliver a number of key messages to parents, pupils and staff, including guidance and advice on the best way to protect pupils, staff and families and being alert for symptoms.

Below is the information we would like you to share.

- Measles is currently spreading in the UK with large outbreaks in areas such as the West Midlands and other parts of England. A significant number (1 in 5) of unvaccinated children who have contracted measles have required hospital treatment
- Measles can spread very quickly among children and adults who are not vaccinated and can cause some people to become seriously unwell and in rare circumstances die
- Measles is spread by the respiratory route. It spreads easily when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. A person with measles is infectious (can spread the disease to other people) from four days before the typical rash appears
- The best way to protect your family is for you and your children to have had the scheduled two doses of the MMR, a **safe and effective vaccine** that protects against Measles, Mumps and Rubella
- If you or your children are not up-to-date with your vaccines contact your GP and they will arrange for you to receive the MMR
- For more information about MMR, speak to your GP or Nurse or visit this link to access a briefing document for schools <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/vaccine-resources-for-health-and-social-care-professionals/measles-and-mmr-vaccination-programme-briefing-document-2024-pdf/>

We are asking parents to be alert for symptoms of measles and to not send their children to school if they are unvaccinated and have any of the symptoms below:



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- cold-like symptoms like a runny nose, sneezing and cough
- red, sore, watery eyes
- high temperature (fever)
- rash that usually starts on the head/neck before spreading down the body
- small white spots inside cheeks and the back of lips

It's very unlikely to be measles if you've had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine or you've had measles before. If you or your child develops these symptoms and is unvaccinated, please call your GP or NHS 111. The person with suspected measles should not go to any health setting (GP, hospital or pharmacy) without ringing ahead first and advising of any symptoms that might suggest measles.

For further information please visit [Measles, Mumps and Rubella \(MMR\) - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health/wales/public-health/communicable-diseases/measles-mumps-and-rubella/) and [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health/wales/public-health/communicable-diseases/measles/)

Yours faithfully

Dr Jane Moore
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Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

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