



## **North Yorkshire and Humber**

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Dear parent/guardian

### **Measles outbreaks**

You will have seen in the news that there have been serious outbreaks of measles in Wales over the last few weeks. Outbreaks are now occurring widely in England, with teenagers being those most affected. This is because many of them missed out on their MMR vaccinations in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the vaccine was mistakenly linked to cases of autism.

These outbreaks are a serious concern with up to a million children and young teenagers potentially vulnerable to infection, especially as children of this age are going into secondary school where the spread of infection is much more likely to happen.

### **Measles can cause very serious illness**

Measles usually causes a runny nose, red eyes, cough, high temperature and rash. It can also cause complications including ear infections, diarrhoea, pneumonia and convulsions. It is more likely to be serious in pregnant women, people whose immunity is not working properly and babies under a year of age. Very serious complications, such as inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) are rare, but can be fatal.

### **Measles spreads very easily**

Measles is one of the most infectious diseases known. You can catch measles if you spend 15 minutes with someone who has the disease. The measles virus is spread through the air and in tiny droplets that come out of the nose and mouth of an infected person.

### **MMR vaccine provides safe and effective protection against measles, mumps and rubella**

MMR vaccine has been shown across the world to be a safe and effective way of preventing measles. It can protect your child and others against measles infection and its serious consequences.

For further information on measles and the MMR vaccination go to: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles). We hope it helps you decide on getting your child vaccinated against measles (as well as mumps and rubella) if they haven't already been vaccinated. People are best protected from the measles virus when they have had **two** doses of the MMR vaccination. If you are unsure if your child has received the 2 doses (usually given around 12 or 13 months of age, and again around the time of school entry) check in your child's "Red book" or contact your GP practice. If they have missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccines make an appointment at your GP practice, the vaccination is free on the NHS.

We do hope you will take this opportunity to ensure your child is fully protected.

Yours sincerely,



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