



February 2024

By email only

Reference Number: NIO.19.02.24.01

Re: Importance of MMR vaccine and being measles aware

Dear Principal,

In recent months there has been a rise in cases of measles in parts of the UK and Europe. On 7th February the HSE reported the death of an adult with confirmed measles. This is the first confirmed measles case notified in Ireland in 2024.

The HSE is writing to ask for your support in raising awareness among parents, guardians and school staff about:

- watching out for the symptoms of measles
- the importance of the MMR vaccine in protecting children

Support school vaccination teams in the delivery of 4 in 1 and MMR vaccine to junior infants

The majority of primary schools have been visited this academic year by HSE school vaccination teams to deliver 4 in 1 and MMR vaccine to junior infants.

If your school has not yet been visited, please work with your local HSE school vaccination team to agree a date for vaccination. (In Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal this vaccine is delivered by GP practices and no action is required by schools).

We would appreciate if you would consider supporting efforts to prevent the spread of measles by:

1. Sharing information through your school channels about the signs of measles with parents (download a copy of the [Think Measles posters](#) from the HPSC and consider displaying in your school)
2. Encouraging parents to visit www.immunisation.ie for information about the importance of MMR vaccine.



Oifig Náisiúnta Imdhíonta
Aonaid 8/9 Páirc Gnó Shráid an Mhainéir
Sráid an Mhainéir
Baile Átha Cliath 7, D07 X320

HSE National Immunisation Office
Unit 8/9 Manor Street Business Park
Manor Street
Dublin 7, D07 X320

www.immunisation.ie
[Twitter](#), [Instagram](#),
[YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#)
t 01 8676108
e immunisation@hse.ie

We have drafted a sample letter, please do share this with parents'.

If there is a case of measles diagnosed in someone who attends your school, the local Public Health Department will be in contact to give advice to the principal.

If they have any concerns, please contact the Public Health Department in your region
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/publichealth/publichealthdepts/contact%20us/>

Kind regards,

Dr Lucy Jessop

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National Immunisation Office
MRCN 424447

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National Clinical Lead Child Health
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Re: Importance of MMR vaccine and being measles aware

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

In recent months there has been a rise in cases of measles in parts of the UK and Europe. On 7th February the HSE reported the death of an adult with confirmed measles. This is the first confirmed measles case notified in Ireland in 2024.

We are asking parents to be measles aware and to make sure your children have received their recommended MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines.

Be measles aware

Measles can be unpleasant and is a potentially serious and highly infectious disease.

The symptoms of measles include:

- high fever
- cough
- runny nose
- rash, which usually appears on head and neck first and spreads to rest of body

Serious complications of measles include pneumonia and encephalitis (swelling of the brain). One in five infected may need to go to hospital and it can be fatal.

More information about measles symptoms is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/measles/> or by searching 'HSE measles'.

If your child has been diagnosed with confirmed measles by your GP or hospital please contact your school. Children in your child's class may need to be vaccinated if they are not fully vaccinated against measles.

MMR vaccine

MMR vaccination is the best way to protect against measles.

Uptake of both doses of the MMR vaccine has been below 90% for some time. This is of great concern because measles can be serious and highly infectious.



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Two doses needed

Your child needs two doses of the MMR vaccine to be considered fully vaccinated. The first dose is given by GP practices when children are 12 months of age. The second dose is given by HSE school vaccination teams when children are in junior infants. (In Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, this vaccine is delivered by GP practices).

Junior infants

If your child is in junior infants, please take the opportunity to get them vaccinated with their 4 in 1 and MMR vaccine. HSE school teams are still visiting schools to offer the vaccine. If your child missed the vaccine when the teams visited your school this year, you can contact the HSE school team to arrange an appointment to get the vaccine.

MMR vaccine for older children and adults

It is not too late to be vaccinated. The MMR vaccine is now available as a catch-up vaccine through GP practices for anyone who may have missed their first or second dose.

More information

More information about the MMR vaccine is available from www.immunisation.ie

Kind regards,

Dr Lucy Jessop

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