



Think Measles in Schools

27th February 2024

About Measles

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has declared a national incident following Measles outbreaks in London and West Midlands. The best protection against measles for children and adults is to get both doses of the MMR vaccine.

Measles is a highly infectious, serious illness that can be very unpleasant. Those most at risk are under 1's, the unvaccinated, immuno-compromised or pregnant woman. There is no specific treatment available, so it is important to get vaccinated to avoid serious illness.

In the UK, children are routinely offered the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccination when they reach 1 year old, and a follow-up dose at 3 years and 4 months. In recent years, the number of children vaccinated against measles has fallen.

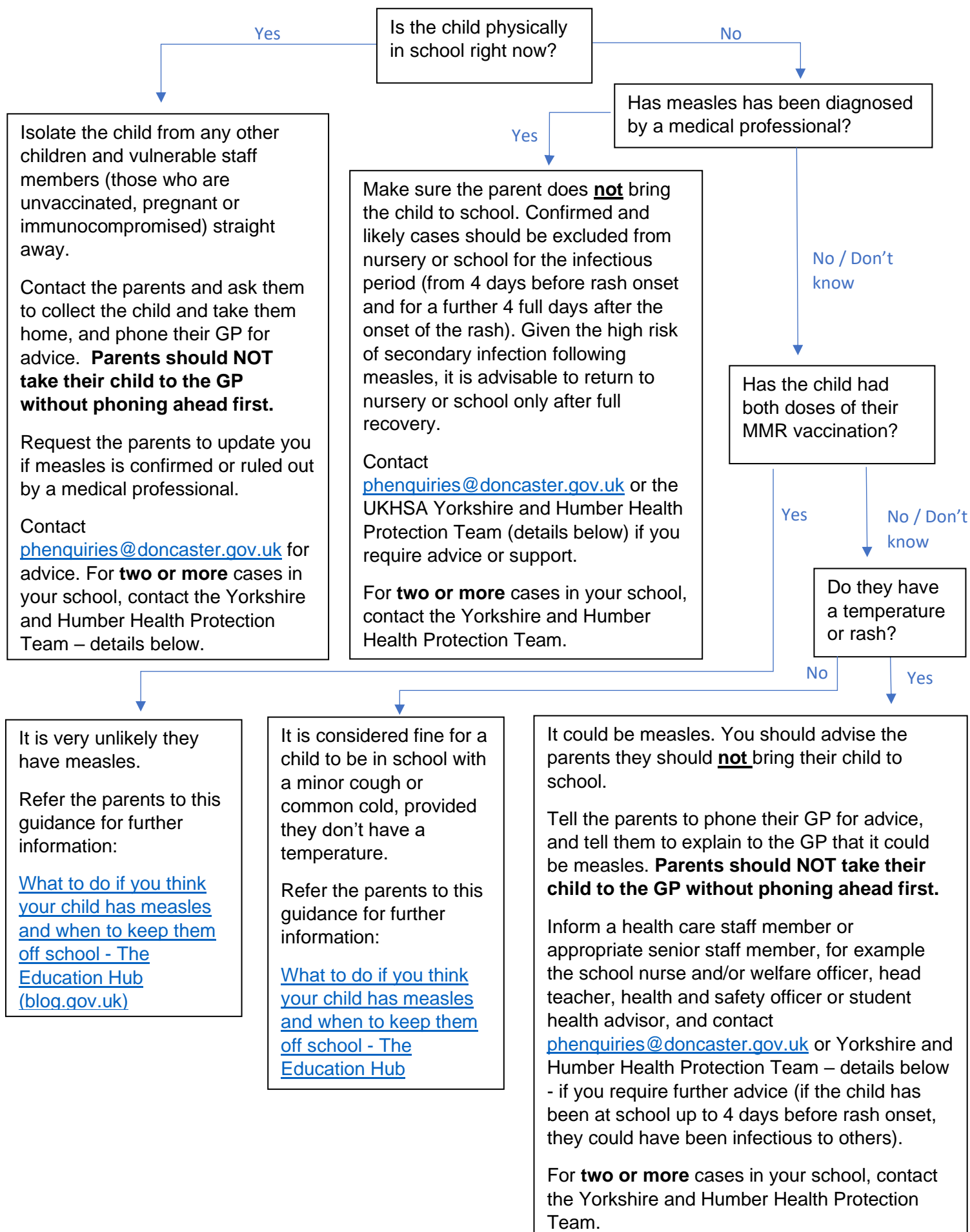
The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is calling on all parents and guardians to make sure their children are up to date with their 2 MMR doses. It's never too late to catch up, and you can get the MMR vaccine for free on the NHS whatever your age.

What are the symptoms of measles?

- Usually starts with cold-like symptoms
- High fever
- Sore red watery eyes
- Cough and/or runny nose
- Small red spots with bluish-white centres inside the mouth
- A red/brown blotchy rash which appears several days later, rough to the touch, and harder to see on darker skin tones



What to do if a child at your school has measles or suspected measles



Contacting the UKHSA Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Team

It is the responsibility of health care professionals to report individual cases of measles to the UKHSA Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Team. If they receive a report of a confirmed case in your school, they may contact you for information to support contact tracing, and provide you with advice and support.

If you have **two or more cases** in your school, you should contact the UKHSA Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Team yourself by phoning: **0113 386 0300** (please note this number will be changing to **0300 3030234** on 11th March 2024). You can also contact them at any time if you are unsure what to do.

Advice to staff and other students if there is a positive case in the school

If a measles case is **confirmed**, UKHSA Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Team will be informed and will contact you to advise based on the specific situation if any actions are required.

Children in the same class as a suspected or confirmed measles case should **not** automatically be sent home to isolate. Many of them will already be fully vaccinated, and not at risk of contracting measles. Head teachers may, however, wish to consider excluding unvaccinated pupils who have been exposed, because of the risk to other students.

Parents should be informed that, if their child has had both MMR doses, they will be protected against measles and there is no need to keep their child off school just because someone else in their class has measles.

Contacts of cases at higher risk of developing measles (such as unvaccinated siblings, or unvaccinated staff members who have had contact of more than 15 minutes in the same room with the case), may be asked to self-exclude from school/nursery for the incubation period (21 days after contact with a case of measles). Vulnerable children and staff members (such as those who are pregnant), may also wish to self-isolate for 21 days. Those who've had two doses of the MMR vaccine do **not** need to isolate.

If you require further advice or support with communications following an outbreak in your school, please contact Public Health at City of Doncaster Council: phenquiries@doncaster.gov.uk.

How you can prepare

You may wish to consider the following in the short-term:

- Send out the letter in the appendix to all parents/guardians, explaining the symptoms of measles, encouraging them to check if their child is vaccinated, and what to do if their child gets measles
- Print and display copies of [Measles: don't let your child catch it flyer \(for schools\) - Health Publications](#) (available in multiple languages [here](#)).

- Let staff know about the risks of measles, and encourage them to check their vaccination status and [get vaccinated with MMR](#) if they haven't had two does already.
 - There is a section regarding staff immunisations available as part of this guidance: [Supporting immunisation programmes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Ensure your Business Continuity plans are up-to-date. You may wish to think about:
 - Where a child with measles could be isolated whilst they are waiting to be collected from school
 - Provisions for if unvaccinated or vulnerable staff members have to take time off to isolate. [The guidance](#) indicates that unvaccinated staff members who have been in contact with a confirmed measles case for 15 minutes or more will need to isolate for 21 days. Other staff members, such as those who are pregnant or immunocompromised, may also wish to isolate as a precaution. This could potentially mean a number of staff off from work at the same time.

Contact Public Health at City of Doncaster Council if you require further advice or support at: phenquiries@doncaster.gov.uk.

Guidance and further support

For general information and support, email City of Doncaster Council's Public Health team on: phenquiries@doncaster.gov.uk (not for clinical enquiries, and do not use for sending sensitive or personal information).

For two or more measles cases in your school, or if you are unsure what to do, contact UKHSA Yorkshire and the Humber Health protection team by phoning: **0113 386 0300** (please note this number will be changing to **0300 303 0234** on 11th March 2024).

- [National measles guidelines January 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- NHS 111 / [Check your symptoms - NHS 111](#)
- [Measles: information for schools and healthcare centres - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [What to do if you think your child has measles and when to keep them off school - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://blog.gov.uk)

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victor Joseph', with a horizontal line underneath.

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Appendix – Suggested letter for sending to parents

National Measles Incident

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has declared a national incident following Measles outbreaks in London and West Midlands. The best protection against measles for children and adults is to get both doses of the MMR vaccine.

In response to this we would like to share with you the advice from UKHSA currently:

Measles is a highly infectious, serious illness that can be very unpleasant. Those most at risk are under 1's, the unvaccinated, immuno-compromised or pregnant woman. There is no specific treatment available, so it is important to get vaccinated to avoid serious illness.

If you and your child have been vaccinated, it's very unlikely you will catch Measles.

Symptoms of Measles

- **Usually starts with cold-like symptoms**
- **High fever**
- **Sore red watery eyes**
- **Cough and/or runny nose**
- **Small red spots with bluish-white centres inside the mouth**
- **A red/brown blotchy rash which appears several days later, rough to the touch.**

You should keep your child away from school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appeared and until they are completely recovered. [This guidance](#) explains when you should and should not send your child to school.

Keep your child away from babies, anyone who is pregnant and those with a weakened immune system.

'THINK' Measles

If you think your child has measles or has been in contact in the last 3 weeks with someone with a confirmed case of measles, then please stay at home and call your GP surgery.

- **DO NOT** bring your child to school or nursery.
- **DO NOT** visit the GP surgery/ out of hours, or Hospital.
- **CALL** ahead to the GP surgery so measures can be put in place for your arrival.

Children in school who are suspected of having measles will be isolated and parents will be asked to collect promptly.

Vaccination

If you are unsure about whether your child is due a vaccine or has missed a vaccination you can check your vaccination status by calling your GP surgery or checking your 'red book'. If your child has missed one of their MMR's call your GP surgery and book an appointment.

The MMR schedule is usually 1 vaccine at 12 months old and a 2nd vaccine at pre-school, around 3 years and 4 months. For adults it's never too late to get vaccinated. Adults require 2 vaccines at 4 weeks apart.

You can request a version of the MMR vaccine that **does not contain pork products** from your GP surgery, making it suitable for all faiths. Please note that the GP practice may need to order this product in specially, so it will be helpful to tell the GP surgery before the appointment.

MMR vaccine is not advised during pregnancy, those women of childbearing age should avoid getting pregnant for at least 4 weeks following vaccination.

Pregnant women are advised to contact their midwife/GP surgery if they believe they have come into contact with Measles. Pregnant women who suspect they might have Measles should **not** go to antenatal clinic or any other maternity setting until they have been assessed.

The information provided by UKHSA, should provide clarity and reassurance. We ask that you remain vigilant over the half term holiday and if you are in any doubt about sending your child into school unwell, we would appreciate you considering keeping them at home.

Please follow the links below for further information and guidance:

- [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [Think Measles! \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [Pregnant? Immunisation helps to protect you and your baby from infectious diseases \(publishing.Services.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.Services.gov.uk)
- [What to do if you think your child has measles and when to keep them off school - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](http://blog.gov.uk)