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Date: 15th April 2024

Dear Parent / Guardian,

You may be aware of the recent increase in measles and whooping cough cases in England. These infections can affect anyone at any age, but most cases are in school-aged children. They can be very distressing and could have a huge impact on your child's life. Children can miss out on school due to time spent unwell, be hospitalised, and even experience life-long complications, disability and in some cases, these infections tragically can cause death.

Both measles and whooping cough are preventable through vaccinations given as part of the routine childhood immunisation programme. Vaccination against measles is provided through the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, given at 1 year and 3 years and 4 months of age. Protection against whooping cough is provided through the 6-in-1 vaccine offered at 8, 12, and 16 weeks of age, followed by a pre-school booster. The whooping cough vaccine is also offered to pregnant women so that their young babies are protected from birth.

Unfortunately, vaccine uptake in children is the lowest it has been in a decade and is well below the 95% uptake needed to protect the population and prevent outbreaks. This is giving these serious diseases a chance to get a foothold in our communities. Achieving high vaccination coverage across the population is important as it also indirectly helps protect very young infants (under one) and other vulnerable groups who may not be able to get vaccinated.

For us all to do our part to reduce the risk of these infections spreading in our communities and affecting our families, please could I ask that you:

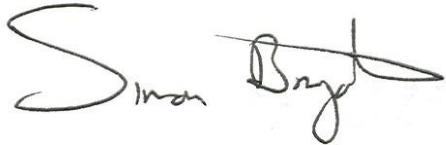
- Make sure your children are up to date with all their vaccinations. You can check your child's personal child health record (PCHR), known as the red book, or contact your GP practice. If you or your child have missed a vaccine, it is never too late to catch up.
- Measles is still common in many countries worldwide. Before you travel, make sure you and your family are up to date with all routine and, if applicable, travel vaccinations.
- If you are pregnant, please talk to your midwife about the whooping cough vaccine.

Director of Adults' Health and Care
Graham Allen

Chief Executive
Carolyn Williamson

If you do have any questions, do not hesitate to speak to your GP, midwife, health visitor or school nurse – they will be happy to address any concerns and guide you through the vaccination schedule.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Bryant FFPH
Director of Public Health
Hampshire County Council

For more information

[Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Whooping cough - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Available travel vaccines - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)