

March 2012

Dear Nursery Head/Early Years Setting Manager

**Measles Alert – Advice to protect children who have lowered immunity**

You will be aware that measles is circulating in the community with an outbreak affecting the whole of Merseyside. A few weeks ago I wrote to parents alerting them to the outbreak and highlighting the importance of MMR vaccination to protect their children.

There are however some children with lowered immunity who cannot have MMR. Measles can be a serious infection in a person who has lowered immunity. There may be some children in your school / nursery with a compromised immune status, therefore, I am writing to advise you on the actions that can be taken to protect immunocompromised children specifically but also all other children.

- Children who are not well should **not be at nursery, pre-school or school**. Please exclude any child with suspected measles for at least 4 days after onset of rash.
- You may be aware of some **children in your school /nursery who have illnesses that affect their immunity**. Please advise the parents of these children **immediately** if there are cases of Measles in the nursery /school (this also applies for other infectious diseases e.g. Chicken pox, shingles). These children will urgently need an assessment of risk by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health Protection Unit (CMHPU) and may be offered preventative treatment (immunoglobulin injection) to reduce the effect of measles **so a prompt response is essential**.
- If a **child in your establishment is confirmed as having measles** or is likely to have Measles, the CMHPU or Infection control team will be in touch with you to advise and take public health actions to protect contacts. (Please note- the most vulnerable contacts are pregnant women, infants under 1 year of age and immunocompromised individuals).
- Please continue to encourage parents/guardians to have their **children immunised with MMR**. A high uptake of MMR will not only protect children and their families but the whole community, especially those children who, for medical reasons, can't be immunised.
- Letters have been sent to parents of children under six years and will shortly be sent to parents of children aged 6-11 who are not fully protected by MMR. If parents have any queries please direct them to the PCT Patient Advice and Liaison Service which can be contacted on 0151 495 5187.

If you require any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact Michelle Falconer (Immunisation Co-ordinator) on 01928 593666.

Yours sincerely

*Dympna Edwards*

**Dr Dympna Edwards**  
**Interim Director of Public Health, Halton and St Helens**