

Our Ref: MC/KA

To: All Healthcare Professionals Working in Education

Health Protection Agency

Kent Health Protection Unit

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Dear Colleagues

Re: High numbers of cases of measles over the summer holiday

Over the summer holidays, the Health Protection Agency has become aware of an increase in cases of measles over what would normally be expected. With schools resuming for the new school term it is crucial that children are fully immunised, because the increased close contact in schools can allow the virus to spread more easily.

The Health Protection Agency has been working closely with the NHS to encourage uptake of the MMR vaccination. Health professionals have been encouraged to offer vaccination to patients who are not fully immunised with two doses of the vaccine. Local health services are also working to encourage uptake in community groups considered to be at greatest risk.

Although MMR uptake is increasing in two year olds, there is a group of older children who may have missed out on MMR because of the adverse publicity, and many of these will now be of school age.

Therefore, I am writing to ask that health professionals working in education, and other relevant staff, are aware of the recent increase in measles cases. Staff should be vigilant to any pupils showing the signs and symptoms of the infection. If measles is suspected, please contact your local Health Protection Unit for advice.

We also ask schools to take advantage of any available opportunities to encourage parents/guardians to ensure their children are fully immunised with two doses of the MMR vaccine - the safest and most effective way of protecting children against the infection.

For further information on measles, including signs and symptoms and the MMR vaccination, go to www.hpa.org.uk and select 'measles' from the topics menu. Alternatively go to www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Dr M Chandrakumar
Director