

Great Crosby Catholic Primary School



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HC/sm

8th July 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Measles

Cases of measles are spreading in the Merseyside area. We now have some cases in our school - please read this information on how to protect you and your family.

How serious is measles?

Measles is a serious illness which affects both children and adults. Most people who catch measles become very unwell, and some may be admitted to hospital. Some people including babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity, are at increased risk of complications. In rare cases, people infected with measles will die.

Measles is highly infectious, and spreads very easily among people who are unvaccinated. A child or adult who has measles will infect nearly all of the unprotected children with whom they come into contact.

The MMR vaccine can prevent measles, and also protects against mumps and rubella. The number of children vaccinated in Sefton is below the recommended levels, with some areas having very low uptake. This means that many children in every setting are likely to be at risk from measles.

What are the symptoms of measles? What do I need to look out for?

Measles usually starts with a runny nose, sneezing and coughing, and a high temperature. People may have conjunctivitis or red, sore eyes.

The measles rash usually appears a few days later. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body. The rash looks like red-brown spots which may join together to form blotchy patches. People of any age can catch measles if they have not been vaccinated.

If you or your child has a rash which could be measles, they must not attend school, and you must contact your GP as soon as possible or call 111.

It is important to phone ahead, and not just turn up at a GP practice, A&E or walk in centre, so arrangements can be made for the patient to wait separately from others.

People with measles are infectious for four days before the rash appears, and for four days afterwards. People with measles must stay at home during this period and not go to nursery, school or work.

Where to find out more advice and information

More information about measles is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/.

This site also contains a picture of the measles rash.

More information about the MMR vaccine is available at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/mmr-for-all-general-leaflet.

Chicken pox**We have also had an increase in confirmed cases of chicken pox / shingles.**

Chickenpox is a common and usually mild childhood infection (although you can get it at any age). The majority of children will have caught chickenpox by the time they turn 5 years old. It usually gets better by itself within a week without needing to see a GP. It causes a rash of red, itchy spots that turn into fluid-filled blisters that crust over to form scabs.

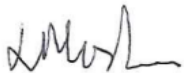
To prevent spreading the infection, children should stay away from nursery or school. It is very easy to catch chickenpox by touching other children or staff or shared surfaces such as table tops, taps, toys and handles. Good hygiene and hand washing is the most important way to prevent the infection spreading.

If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately.

All children with chickenpox should remain off school / nursery until at least 5 days after the start of their rash AND until all their spots have crusted over.

Please remember to give any available details of your child's illness when leaving an absence message so we can monitor cases i.e not 'unwell / poorly'.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Morton
Headteacher