



Public Health  
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Dear parent/guardian

**RE: Measles and MMR Vaccination**

As you may have heard or seen in the news, a national catch-up programme was announced earlier in the year to ensure children and teenagers who may have missed out on the MMR vaccination are fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella (German measles).

This programme was announced after large outbreaks of measles in England and Wales. It aims to prevent further outbreaks by catching up with 10-16 year olds, who may have missed out on the two doses of vaccine needed to ensure maximum protection, before the start of the next school year.

Numbers of measles cases in Surrey are low – only six confirmed so far this year – but the longer term trend is for this to increase. Experts believe this is because of the proportion of 10-16 year olds who missed out on vaccination in the late 1990s and early 2000s due to widespread concern about possible links between autism and the vaccine. This has been strongly discredited and there is no evidence to link the vaccine with autism. However, low vaccination uptake over many years allowed measles to become common again.

Measles is not a mild illness – it is extremely unpleasant and can lead to serious complications. Many children have needed hospital treatment this year. The only way to prevent outbreaks is to ensure good uptake of the MMR vaccine across all age groups. It is never too late to get vaccinated. Parents unsure if their child has had the full two doses should talk to their GP who will have a record and can arrange vaccination if needed.

With this letter is a flyer which answers common questions about measles, the vaccine and benefits of vaccination. Please take a few moments to read it and we hope it encourages you and helps you decide on getting your child vaccinated. The vaccination is free on the NHS and will be available from your GP.

Yours sincerely

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