

**Re: Importance of MMR vaccine and being measles aware**

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

In recent months there has been a rise in cases of measles in parts of the UK and Europe. On 7<sup>th</sup> February the HSE reported the death of an adult with confirmed measles. This is the first confirmed measles case notified in Ireland in 2024.

We are asking parents to be measles aware and to make sure your children have received their recommended MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines.

**Be measles aware**

Measles can be unpleasant and is a potentially serious and highly infectious disease. The symptoms of measles include:

- high fever
- cough
- runny nose
- rash, which usually appears on head and neck first and spreads to rest of body

Serious complications of measles include pneumonia and encephalitis (swelling of the brain). One in five infected may need to go to hospital and it can be fatal.

More information about measles symptoms is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/measles/> or by searching 'HSE measles'.

If your child has been diagnosed with confirmed measles by your GP or hospital please contact your school. Children in your child's class may need to be vaccinated if they are not fully vaccinated against measles.

## **MMR vaccine**

MMR vaccination is the best way to protect against measles.

Uptake of both doses of the MMR vaccine has been below 90% for some time. This is of great concern because measles can be serious and highly infectious.

### **Two Doses Needed**

Your child needs two doses of the MMR vaccine to be considered fully vaccinated. The first dose is given by GP practices when children are 12 months of age. The second dose is given by HSE school vaccination teams when children are in junior infants. (In Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, this vaccine is delivered by GP practices).

### **Junior infants**

If your child is in junior infants, please take the opportunity to get them vaccinated with their 4 in 1 and MMR vaccine. HSE school teams are still visiting schools to offer the vaccine. If your child missed the vaccine when the teams visited your school this year, you can contact the HSE school team to arrange an appointment to get the vaccine.

### **MMR vaccine for older children and adults**

It is not too late to be vaccinated. The MMR vaccine is now available as a catch-up vaccine through GP practices for anyone who may have missed their first or second dose.

### **More information**

More information about the MMR vaccine is available from [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

Kind regards,

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