



Population Health
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Important health information – Measles preparedness

Dear Principal/ Board of Trustees/ Head Teacher,

You may be aware there is currently a measles outbreak in New Zealand, so far mainly affecting communities in the North Island.

The most effective way to prevent an outbreak in Otago or Southland is through vaccination. The MMR vaccine provides the best protection against measles and two doses are on the national immunisation schedule. If a case of measles is confirmed in your school/centre, staff and students who cannot demonstrate immunity to measles would need to be excluded for up to 14 days. Immunity to measles can be demonstrated either with documentation of receiving two MMR, or serological evidence of immunity to measles.

To minimise disruption to your school/centre in case of a measles case, we suggest you ensure the immunisation records for students and staff are up-to-date. This will ensure the Medical Officer of Health can quickly access the required information should a case occur at your school. Should you identify students who are overdue their vaccination, this may provide an opportunity to remind parents to ensure their child's vaccinations are up to date.

MMR vaccine is currently on the schedule at ages 15 months and 4 years of age. However, a child or adult can receive the vaccine at any age if they have not received the required 2 doses. People born before 1 January 1969 are assumed to have immunity to measles through wild exposure to the disease, and will not require vaccinations.

We suggest you circulate the attached newsletter item to your parent community to remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children are fully vaccinated.

If you have staff and/or students attending tournaments or functions with students from other centres in New Zealand, it would be prudent to enquire with the organisers about their preparations for preventing the spread of measles. This way you can minimise the risk of bringing back measles to your school.

For further information please phone your public health nurse, or visit

www.health.govt.nz/measles
www.immune.org.nz

Item for school/ECC newsletter

Measles update

You may be aware there is currently a measles outbreak in New Zealand, so far mainly affecting communities in the North Island.

This as a timely reminder to check your child's vaccination status and ensure they are up to date with their vaccinations. Please let your school or early childcare centre know your child's vaccination status, if you haven't already done so. They will require written evidence of which vaccines your child has already. You may also use this as an opportunity to review the vaccination status of your whole family.

Two x MMR provides the best protection for measles and the MMR vaccine is normally given at 15 months and 4 years of age. Because MMR was not on the childhood immunisation schedule until 1990, many adults and parents who got all their vaccinations in childhood may not have received MMR and are encouraged to contact their practice nurse to discuss catch up MMR. If you are unsure, you can check with your GP or your Wellchild book for your vaccination history. Catch up MMR is available for all children and adults who have not received their two MMR on today's current schedule.

If a child becomes sick with measles at your school or centre, children that are not considered immune to measles, will be excluded.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your public health nurse, practice nurse, or visit:

www.health.govt.nz/measles

www.immune.org.nz