

12 September 2017

Dear Oamaru School Principals

Oamaru is experiencing a mumps outbreak. Mumps is a viral illness that spreads easily and cannot be treated. There are no antibiotics that work against mumps.

The best protection against mumps is immunisation with two doses of the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine which is offered at age 15 months and 4 years on the National Immunisation Schedule.

Please consider:

- 1) Ensure your school's immunisation register is up to date, especially for MMR.
- 2) Encourage parents to contact their GP to ensure their children are up to date with immunisations, especially MMR.
- 3) Encourage staff to contact their GP to check they are up to date with immunisations.
- 4) Anyone who does not have a GP in Oamaru can still get the MMR vaccine for free. Please contact any Oamaru GP to find out more.
- 5) Contact your Public Health Nurse if you need further support.

Mumps can be disruptive to attendance at your school. A person with mumps is required to stay away from school for 5 days from onset of symptoms. People with whom they have had close face to face contact (within 1m) are required to stay away from school for 2 – 3 weeks, **if they are not considered immune and don't get their MMR vaccination straight away.** Specific dates of exclusion will be worked out on a case by case basis.

To be considered immune to mumps, children and staff need to meet one of the following:

- Immunised with two documented doses of MMR vaccine if four years or older.
- Born before 1981 (likely to have been exposed to mumps naturally when it was common).
- Proven to be immune via a blood test.

Attached is a communication you can disseminate to parents.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Public Health Nurse.

Yours sincerely,

Mike O'Brien  
Communicable Disease Nurse  
Public Health South