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22 April 2013

To: Parents/Guardians of children in all schools and nurseries across County Durham

Dear Parent/Guardian

You may have seen the recent press coverage about the on-going measles outbreak across the country, including the North East region. I am writing to remind you about the importance of immunisation as an effective way to protect your child.

At the moment, the cases in the North East are predominantly in the Teesside area. However, as we are such a mobile population, the risk of coming into contact with measles has significantly grown.

Measles is highly infectious and unvaccinated children and adults who haven't had it before are at risk when it is circulating, as it is now in the North East. It is very important at times like this to check your child's immunisation history and ensure it is up to date for their age.

Specifically, to have the best protection against measles, two doses of the MMR vaccine are required. As part of the childhood immunisation programme the first dose of the vaccine is given at 12 -13 months and a second dose around 3 years 4 months.

Please check that you have written proof that your child is up to date with their MMR vaccines (for example in their child health record book) and if they are not please arrange for them to have the vaccine at your GP surgery as soon as possible. It is never too late to have this done.

If you are not sure if your child has had two doses of MMR vaccine, please check with your GP surgery and they will be able to tell you.

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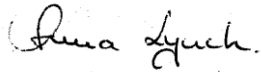
Children and Adults Services

Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UJ
Main Telephone 03000 260 000 Textphone 0191 383 3802 Text 07786 02 69 56

An information leaflet about measles is included with this letter. **If your child does develop any symptoms as outlined in the leaflet, they should not attend school and you should ring your GP practice for advice.** Please tell the practice you suspect your child may have measles – the GP practice may then decide to speak to you on the telephone rather than seeing your child at the surgery. Any child who has measles should stay off school until four full days after the start of the rash.

Please remember – the best way to protect your child is to ensure they have had two doses of MMR vaccine.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Anna Lynch
Director of Public Health, County Durham