

Public Health Team  
Barking Town Hall  
1 Town Square  
Barking  
IG11 7LU

20<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,

### **Don't be at risk from measles this back to school season**

Measles cases have been rising in London. There is no cure and vaccination is the only protection against becoming seriously unwell. The virus infects the mouth, nose, throat and lungs, then spreads throughout the body, causing severe disease, which can result in complications and even death.

Measles is one of the world's most contagious diseases, spread by close or direct contact with an infected person via coughing or sneezing. One person infected by measles can infect nine out of 10 of their unvaccinated close contacts.

The good news is, if you are vaccinated you are protected. The measles vaccine has been in use for about 60 years, is safe and effective and has reduced cases by 99.9% in the UK. It is usually incorporated with rubella and mumps vaccines in the MMR vaccination.

There will be children who are not fully vaccinated either starting school or returning to school, making outbreaks more likely as children starting mixing again.

Any child who comes into close contact with someone with measles and is not fully vaccinated with two doses may be asked to self-isolate. Children who are already fully vaccinated will not need to miss any school.

### **Staying up to date with your child's vaccines**

You can search 'NHS child vaccines' online or visit [nhs.uk/child-vaccines](https://www.nhs.uk/child-vaccines) to see which vaccinations are given when. If you think your child might be behind on their MMR, polio or any other vaccination you can check your child's health record (red book) or contact your GP to see if they are up to date.

Your GP can quickly arrange for you to catch up with vaccinations. If your child had their first vaccinations abroad it is important that they still have routine vaccinations here, and your GP can help arrange that. If you're not registered with a GP, you can register online at <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp> (anyone can register, and you don't need ID or proof of address).

Parents of children aged 4 to 11, whose vaccination record says they are behind on polio and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccinations, are being contacted by an organisation called Vaccination UK. They have been employed by the NHS to arrange catch up doses at a local clinic or at school this autumn so please consider consenting so your child can get protected.

Yours sincerely,



**Matthew Cole**  
Director of Public Health  
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

**Diane Jones**  
Chief Nursing Officer  
NHS North East London