



10 August 2016

To all schools in the Greater Wellington region

Dear Principals and Board of Trustees

Important health information – Measles in the Wellington region

There are currently three cases of measles (English measles) in the Wellington region.

Measles is a highly infectious and serious illness. If measles occurs in your school all students and staff (teaching, administration, sports coaches etc) will be required to have **written** evidence that they have either had two doses of measles vaccine (MMR) after they were 12 months of age or doctor diagnosed measles, to be at school. **Anyone who does not have evidence of measles protection will be required to stay off school until 14 days after their last contact with the infectious person.** This may be extended if there are further cases at the school.

To protect your students and staff and minimise disruption we recommend the following actions:

- share this information with all your parents and staff
- ensure your Immunisation Register is up to date (these registers are a legal requirement for primary schools and early childcare education centres)
- encourage all staff and students to be protected from measles
- plan how you will support the education needs of any students during the time they are required to be off school.

Measles immunisation has been given at different ages since it was introduced in 1969 in New Zealand. The following table will assist teachers, staff and parents determine if they are protected from measles.

What year were you born?	Are you protected?	Recommended action
Adult born before 1 January 1969 in NZ	Yes, you are assumed to be protected as measles was common in NZ at this time.	No action required
Adult born between 1969 and 1980 (inclusive) in NZ	Probably not – only 1 measles vaccine which may have been given at 10 months of age when it was less effective.	Get a second MMR vaccine Measles immunisation is free
Born between 1981 to 1990	You are protected if you had 2 measles vaccines.	Check if you have had 2 measles vaccines. If in doubt get a second MMR vaccine. Measles immunisation is free

Born between 1991-1996 in New Zealand	People born 1991 to 1996 may not have had a second measles vaccine. This was when the second measles vaccine (MMR) was changed from 11 years to 4 years. Children aged 5 to 10 years at this time were offered catch up MMR vaccine through schools but uptake and coverage was not high.	Check if you have had 2 measles vaccines. If in doubt get a second MMR vaccine. Measles immunisation is free
Born in NZ from 1997	You are protected if you have had 2 measles vaccines – usually given at 12-15 months of age and the other at 4 years	Check if you have had 2 measles vaccines. If in doubt get a second MMR vaccine. Measles immunisation is free

Measles vaccine is free from medical centres and we strongly encourage anyone who is not vaccinated to get their vaccine as soon as possible. An information sheet about measles can be found at www.rph.org.nz >Public Health Topics > Infectious diseases > Measles.

For further information on measles and measles immunisation, please visit the Ministry of Health website www.health.govt.nz/measles or the Immunisation Advisory Centre website www.immune.org.nz. You can also call the Immunisation Advisory Centre toll-free on 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) for advice.

We realise a case of measles will be very disruptive to the whole school community and recommend that you share this information with your staff and parents so that they can be prepared and have their documents ready.

Your school public health nurse can provide you with more information and answer any question you may have.

Yours sincerely



Dr Annette Nesdale
Medical Officer of Health