

Dear parent/carer,

Please see the below message from Dudley Council Health Protection Team:

You may have seen recent media reports of rising measles cases across the West Midlands and the Black Country. The most effective way to prevent measles infection, and the possible serious complications it can cause, is by having 2 doses of MMR vaccine. 2 doses of MMR provide 99% protection against measles that is lifelong. It also protects against mumps and rubella. It is safe and effective, and a porcine gelatine free vaccine is available, if this is preferred.

The rise in measles cases is due to declining childhood immunisation rates, including the MMR, nationally over the past 10 years. The higher the immunisation rates, the less opportunity there is for measles infection to circulate, which helps to protect those who are vulnerable due to being unable to receive MMR vaccination (including babies under 1 year old, pregnant women if unvaccinated, and the severely immunocompromised).

It is not too late for children and adults to catch up on the MMR vaccine if they haven't received 2 doses at the recommended ages of 1 year (1st dose) and 3 years and 4 months (2nd dose). Your GP surgery can be contacted to arrange an appointment. If you are unsure whether your child is immunised with 2 doses of MMR vaccine, you can check their 'red book', which is their personal health record. Children who have not had any MMR vaccines may have to stay away from school for up to 21 days if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed measles case.

Please see the NHS webpages on measles and MMR vaccine for more information, and the below link for local pop-up vaccination clinics for MMR:

<https://blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/health-advice/measles#clinic>