



# Great Marlow School

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Dear Parent/ Carer

You may be aware of a recent local case of meningococcal disease.

We understand that parents may be anxious and we are therefore sharing the information below.

Please note that the risk to others in the local area is very low. There is no need for you to make any change in the school routine and no reason for pupils to be kept at home.

## **About invasive meningococcal disease**

Meningococcal disease (meningitis and septicaemia) is an uncommon but serious disease caused by meningococcal bacteria.

The onset of illness is often sudden and early diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics are vital. While meningococcal disease can affect all ages, recent outbreaks have shown that older children, teenagers and young adults, particularly those in shared settings such as schools, colleges and universities, are more likely to be affected.

## **How invasive meningococcal disease spreads**

Meningococcal infection doesn't spread very easily. The bacteria can only be passed to others after a long period of close contact, for example living with someone in shared accommodation, through prolonged kissing or sharing vapes.

People may be offered preventive antibiotics if they have had significant, close contact with someone with meningococcal disease in the last 7 days.

## **What you need to do**

Although meningococcal disease is uncommon, it is important that parents and pupils are aware and alert to the signs and symptoms of invasive meningococcal disease.

## **Signs and symptoms**

Meningococcal disease can progress rapidly, so it's important that parents and pupils are aware of the signs and symptoms. You should seek urgent medical help if you or your child develops any symptoms of meningococcal disease.

- a rash that doesn't fade when pressed with a glass

- sudden onset of high fever
- severe and worsening headache
- stiff neck
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- joint and muscle pain
- dislike of bright lights
- very cold hands and feet
- seizures
- confusion/delirium
- extreme sleepiness/difficulty waking

## Vaccination

The best way to protect your child is with free NHS vaccines (injections). It is not too late to catch up missed vaccines. To check your child has had all their vaccines, you can:

- look in their red book (health record)
- call your GP to check and book an appointment to catch up

The vaccines don't protect from all types (strains) of this bacteria. The free NHS vaccines protect from the most important strain types, including:

- Strain B – this is the most common type, causing 4 out of every 5 cases. Babies born on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 were offered this vaccine on the NHS. Most people born before this date will not have been offered the Strain B vaccine. For more information see the [Men B vaccine factsheet](#).
- Strains A, C, W and Y – these types used to be more common, but the vaccine keeps the number of cases very low. Teenagers are given this vaccine at school. For more information see the [Men ACWY vaccine factsheet](#).

For more information, visit the **NHS website** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/> or see the information available from two charities who offer free support via their websites and helplines:

### The Meningitis Research Foundation

[www.meningitis.org](http://www.meningitis.org)

Helpline UK 080 8800 3344

### Meningitis Now

[www.meningitisnow.org](http://www.meningitisnow.org)

Helpline 0808 80 10 388

or [helpline@meningitisnow.org](mailto:helpline@meningitisnow.org)

Kind regards



Neil Maguire

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Great Marlow School