

20/03/2026

Public Health Information

Dear Educational Setting,

Following the meningitis outbreak in Kent please note the advice on signs and symptoms. While cases remain uncommon, we want to ensure parents and carers are informed and know what to look out for. Meningococcal disease (meningitis) is a rare but serious infection caused by bacteria. It can develop quickly, so recognising the symptoms early and seeking medical help promptly is very important.

Symptoms to be aware of may include:

- A rash that does not fade when pressed through a glass.
- Sudden high fever
- Severe headache
- Stiff neck
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Sensitivity to light
- Cold hands and feet
- Drowsiness or difficulty waking
- Confusion
- Seizures

Not all symptoms will appear, and they can develop rapidly. If you are concerned, please seek medical advice urgently, via NHS 111 or your GP practice.

Young people, particularly those moving on to college or university, can be at increased risk due to mixing with larger groups, so awareness and vaccination is especially important.

Vaccination Programme:

- **Teenagers**

The Men ACWY vaccine, which protects against four types of meningitis (A, C, W and Y), is offered in schools. This includes:

- All Year 9 students
- Any students in Years 10 and 11 who may have missed their vaccination

Consent is needed for children to receive this vaccination. The consent form can be emailed to parents from a programme called 'MAVIS'. Please ask your school if you have not had this email.

- **Children**

From 2015, all children have been offered vaccinations against meningitis B at 8 weeks, 12 weeks and one year. You can check if your child has had this by asking your GP.

Reassurance

Meningitis is usually spread through close, prolonged contact. There is no need for siblings or close contacts to stay off school unless they are unwell.

Further information and support

You can find more information and support here:

- [Meningitis - NHS](#)
- Meningitis Research Foundation (24-hour helpline: 0808 800 3344)
- Meningitis Now (helpline: 0808 80 10 388, 9am–8pm)
- [Meningitis B outbreak: what you need to know – UK Health Security Agency](#)