

May 3, 2019

Dear Principal:

Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral disease that can linger for as long as two hours after an infected person leaves an enclosed space, including a classroom. This poses a threat to unvaccinated students and staff. According to the CDC, there have been over 700 reported cases of measles just this year. A few schools in other jurisdictions have been closed in order to protect the health and safety of their students. Thankfully, measles is a vaccine preventable disease. DC Health would like to work with you and your school to prevent an outbreak in the District of Columbia. To do so, we must ensure that students receive the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine.

The Immunization of School Students Act of 1979 states that, “All students entering and attending child care or school in the District of Columbia are required to show documented proof of complete, correctly spaced immunizations, or proof of medical or religious exemption” (DC Law 3-20, and DCMR Title 22, Chapter1).

Current MMR compliance rate for all school types:

MMR Compliance Report By School Type 5/01/2019		
School Type	Number of Schools	Immunization Compliance
Public	113	92.56%
Charter	124	92.87%
Private	52	90.72%
Parochial	20	87.29%

MMR coverage should be at 95% to decrease our chance for an outbreak. It is critically important that we all play our part and institute the appropriate measures to prevent an outbreak in the District. DC Health monitors suspected cases of vaccine preventable diseases and works with health care providers to ensure rapid identification and care. The District’s health care system is fully prepared to provide easy access to vaccinations for all our children and families, both privately and publically insured. For schools participating in DC Health’s School Health Services Program, nurses continue to identify students at risk and connect them to providers for vaccination and primary care.

Your role is one of the most important in ensuring the protection of all our students. Please instruct parents/guardians with an unimmunized child to visit their healthcare provider to get vaccinated. You can get your school’s coverage rate and a current list of unimmunized students from your school’s immunization point of contact or nurse.

DC Health is available to provide technical assistance for your school, including best practices and actionable steps to control an outbreak. If you have questions, please contact the Immunization Program at (202) 576-7130. For additional information on measles, please direct your school community to dchealth.dc.gov/service/measles.

We value our partnership with schools, and we know that together we can keep our students, families and communities healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

LaQuandra S. Nesbitt, MD, MPH
Director