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18 March 2026

Sent on behalf of Bromley Public Health

Important Information for Schools, Parents and Carers regarding Meningitis

Following recent reports of meningococcal disease in Kent, Bromley Public Health would like to provide clear information for schools, parents and carers. We want to reassure families that the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), NHS England (NHSE) and local partners are actively managing the situation. Although meningitis is uncommon, it can be very serious, so it is important that everyone knows the symptoms to look out for and seeks help quickly if they are worried. We are asking schools to share this information below with staff and families to help ensure early recognition and prompt action.

Current situation:
The recent cases are concentrated in Canterbury and the surrounding areas with little risk to residents locally in Bromley. UKHSA has put in place targeted public health measures there, including antibiotics for people who attended the affected nightclub and for students on the Canterbury campus and a limited, focused vaccination programme to help prevent further spread. At this stage, there is no indication for wider antibiotic treatment or vaccination outside the affected settings. You can read the latest updates from UKHSA here: Cases of invasive meningococcal disease notified in Kent - GOV.UK

Key message:
Meningococcal disease (including meningitis and septicaemia) can become life-threatening very quickly. Early recognition and urgent treatment save lives.

What to look out for:
Symptoms can develop suddenly and may include:

- Fever, very cold hands and feet, limb pain, pale or mottled skin
- Severe headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to light
- Vomiting, confusion, or difficulty waking
- Unusual drowsiness or seizures (fits)
- A **rash that does not fade** when pressed (non-blanching rash)
- In babies and young children: floppy or irritable, high-pitched cry, refusing feeds

Symptoms can appear in any order, and not everyone will have all of them.

When to seek medical help:
Get medical help **immediately** if you are concerned:

- Call **NHS 111** for urgent advice
- Call **999** or go straight to **A&E** if someone is seriously unwell

Newstead Wood School
Avebury Road
Orpington
Kent
t: 01689 853626
e: office@newsteadwood.co.uk
w: newsteadwood.co.uk

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- Do not wait if symptoms are getting worse quickly or if a rash does not fade when pressed

Prevention and reassurance:

- Meningococcal disease is uncommon, but awareness is important.
- Most children and young people remain at very low risk
- Vaccination through the NHS childhood immunisation programme protects against several types of meningococcal bacteria
- Make sure you child is up to date with all recommended vaccines: see details for catch up clinics in Bromley if they have missed out: South London Children and Young People's Community Immunisations :: Kingston and Richmond NHS Foundation Trust

For more information see: What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself – UK Health Security Agency

Susanna Keiderling
Senior Health Protection Practitioner
Public Health
London Borough of Bromley
Churchill Court, 2 Westmoreland Road, Bromley BR1 1AS
Tel: 02083134143
E-mail: susanna.keiderling@bromley.gov.uk
www.bromley.gov.uk

Health Protection Team email: healthprotectionteam@bromley.gov.uk
On-Call telephone number: 020 8313 4433 | Mon – Fri 09.00-17.00