

20 March 2026

Dear Headteacher,

Meningitis update and support for schools

I am writing to share a brief update following recent [reports](#) of invasive meningococcal disease linked to the University of Kent in Canterbury.

We are closely monitoring the situation and working with NHS partners across southeast London. The overall risk to the wider public remains low.

However, meningitis can become serious very quickly, so it is important that school staff and families are aware of the symptoms and know when to seek help. A downloadable poster is available from [Meningitis: Don't ignore the signs and symptoms posters](#)

Recognising the symptoms

Early symptoms can feel like flu or a common illness and may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Muscle aches
- Cold hands and feet

Symptoms can worsen quickly. More serious signs include:

- Stiff neck and sensitivity to light
- Seizures (fits)
- Severe drowsiness or difficulty waking
- Confusion or difficulty concentrating
- A rash that does not fade when pressed (do not wait for a rash to appear)

What to do if someone is unwell

If a child or young person becomes unwell and symptoms are getting worse; it is important to seek urgent medical help. Early treatment can save lives. Please advise parents to trust their instincts and not to wait if they are concerned.

Vaccination and prevention

Vaccination remains the best protection. The MenACWY vaccine is routinely offered to young people in school (usually Year 9) and protects against several types of meningococcal

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disease. Meningitis B vaccination has been offered to babies born after 2015. Older children will not have been routinely vaccinated against this strain of meningitis.

We would be grateful if you could remind parents and carers to check their child's vaccination status and take up any missed vaccines.

Catch-up clinics (including over Easter)

Your school-aged immunisation provider is running catch-up clinics over the Easter period for any children and young people who have missed their vaccinations.

These clinics are taking place across southeast London, and families can attend any session, including those outside their home borough, if this is more convenient.

Please share the attached information with parents and carers to help promote these clinics.

You can reach the school-age immunisation service provider at:

- Email: hrch.ImmunisationTeamLambethMailbox@nhs.net
- Phone: 0208 614 5496

Your support in sharing this information and encouraging vaccination is very important in helping to protect children and young people.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch at publichealth@lambeth.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth Hutt

Director of Public Health
London Borough of Lambeth

