

9 May 2023

Schools Phase 2 letter

To Whom it may Concern,

URGENT: Polio and MMR Vaccinations for Children Aged 1 to 11 in London

We all want to keep children safe and protected from serious illness, this is why we need to do everything we can to support parents across London to ensure their children are up to date with their childhood vaccinations, especially polio and MMR.

Following detections of polio virus in sewage samples in London in 2022, children aged 1-9 in London were offered an additional booster (or catch-up if not up to date) of the polio vaccine to ensure they were fully protected. Although phase 1 of this campaign enabled a large volume of vaccinations to be delivered, data from the programme highlights continuing inequities in uptake.

The additional booster dose offer has now ended. Phase 2 of the campaign will focus on under-vaccinated children aged 1-11 who are least protected and at the highest risk of becoming seriously unwell with polio as well as other preventable disease such as measles. The programme will be led by School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) providers who have a known track record in delivering programmes to large volumes of children and reaching those in marginalised and under-served communities.

The NHS will be contacting the parents of children who are not fully vaccinated to sign a consent form for school-based vaccination or book an appointment at their GP practice. However, the situation in London is serious with many children under-vaccinated and unprotected. We are asking for your support in facilitating a school-centric vaccination programme for these children and helping to raise awareness of the importance of routine childhood vaccinations amongst your school community.

Your SAIS provider will be contacting you to discuss and scope the local offer, including the potential for school-based clinics.

What we need from you:

- Liaise with your local provider, Louise Connolly, Team Lead: Polio Immunisation Team
- Email: hrch.polioimmunisationteam@nhs.net to engage parents and facilitate on-site vaccination at your school where needed.
- Inform parents about the vaccination consent process and support them in completing any forms if they have difficulties.
- Encourage parents to visit nhs.uk/polio for more information about polio vaccination.
- Encourage parents to check their child's health record (red book) to see if they are up to date on all their routine immunisations.
- Raise awareness of polio, MMR and other routine vaccinations with parents in your school community. Information is available online if you search 'NHS child vaccines' or visit nhs.uk/child-vaccines

Throughout the campaign parents can also contact their GP if they have any questions or if they would prefer their child to have their catch-up vaccinations at their GP practice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DH' or similar initials, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Dawn Hollis

Head of Public Health Commissioning
NHS England - London

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S.T. Hailstone', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Simon Hailstone

Consultant in Public Health
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