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20 March 2026

Ref: Important Information for schools, parents and carers regarding meningococcal disease

Dear colleagues,

Following recent reports of meningococcal disease in Kent, Lewisham Council's Public Health team would like to provide clear information for schools to share with 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 meningococcal disease 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 the information below with staff and families to help ensure early recognition and prompt action.

Current situation

The recent cases of meningococcal disease are concentrated in Canterbury and the surrounding areas. UKHSA has put in place targeted public health measures for people most at-risk, including antibiotics for people who attended the nightclub where the outbreak occurred 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 online.](#)

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

Please see the attached official UKHSA leaflet regarding meningitis and septicaemia for details about symptoms to look out for.

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
- 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 your child is up to date with all recommended vaccines: see the following information about catch-up clinics in Lewisham.

Clinics take place every term-time Tuesday and Thursday between 3.40pm and 4.45pm at Downham Health and Leisure Centre, 7 - 9 Moorside Road, Bromley BR1 5EW.

Tel: 020 3903 3635 Email: kraft.lewishamimms@nhs.net

The following clinics will also take place during the Easter holidays:

Date	Time	Location
28/03/2026	10am – 2pm	Bellingham Family Hub, 109 Randlesdown Road, London SE6 3HB
30/03/2026	10am – 3pm	Downham Health and Leisure Centre, 7 - 9 Moorside Road, Bromley BR1 5EW
31/03/2026	10am – 3pm	Downham Health and Leisure Centre, 7 - 9 Moorside Road, Bromley BR1 5EW
01/04/2026	10am – 3pm	Downham Health and Leisure Centre, 7 - 9 Moorside Road, Bromley BR1 5EW
08/04/2026	10am – 3pm	Downham Health and Leisure Centre, 7 - 9 Moorside Road, Bromley BR1 5EW
09/04/2026	10am – 3pm	Downham Health and Leisure Centre, 7 - 9 Moorside Road, Bromley BR1 5EW

Useful resources

- [An overview of meningitis, NHS](#)
- [The Meningitis Research Foundation](#), Mon-Fri, 8am to 5pm, 080 8800 3344
- [Meningitis Now](#), Mon-Thurs, 9am to 4pm; Fri, 9am to 1pm, 0808 80 10 388
- [Managing meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia, UKHSA](#)
- To report a case, email london.region@ukhsa.gov.uk or call 0300 303 0450
- If you have any further questions, email publichealth@lewisham.gov.uk

Your support is much appreciated and please do get in touch if there is anything with which we can support further.

Your sincerely,



Dr Catherine Mbema
 Director of Public Health
 Lewisham Council