Dear Parents,

We have had a case of Measles reported at School on Monday. Here is a fact sheet on Measles to let parents know the symptoms. If your child has any of these symptoms please do not send your child to school and make an appointment with your GP ASAP.

Measles
Measles is a highly contagious viral infection which causes rash, fever, runny nose, cough and sore eyes.
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- Serious complications include pneumonia and encephalitis.
- Measles is very rare in Australia because of immunisation with the MMR vaccine.

What it is
Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. Although it's a respiratory illness that causes fever, it's commonly associated with the skin rash it causes. The illness can be mild or more severe leading to serious complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis (brain inflammation). In the past, measles were very common in childhood but in Australia the introduction of a national immunisation program means it's now very rare.

Symptoms of measles usually show about 10 days after you become infected and can last for about two to four days. These may include:
- Fever
- Runny nose
- Eye infection (conjunctivitis)
- Cough
- Small spots inside your cheeks

A red rash usually appears a few days after the first symptoms, starting on the face and hairline before spreading to the rest of the body. It lasts about a week.

Measles is usually spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can survive on surfaces for up to two hours so touching a contaminated surface and then touching your mouth or nose can lead to infection. You're most likely to catch measles from someone who is in the early stages of their infection.

When measles is suspected, a blood test and samples from the nose, throat and urine will confirm diagnosis.

Who it affects
Measles is rare in Australia because of vaccination but high-risk groups include:
- People who haven't been immunised – especially children and healthcare workers.
- Those with a weak immunity system such as people with a chronic illness.

How to prevent it
Measles can be avoided with a highly effective vaccine called the MMR (measles/mumps-rubella) vaccine. It's provided free to children at 12 months and four years of age. Receiving the recommended two doses provides 99 per cent immunity against the measles infection. Those who've had measles will usually have lifelong immunity.

How to treat it.
There is no specific treatment for measles but rest, drinking plenty of fluids and paracetamol to treat the fever will be recommended. Staying home will also reduce the risk of transmission.

Sincerely,

Catrina Niddrie
Acting Principal