



**NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL**  
COURAGE COMMITMENT COMPASSION

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Dear Parents and Carers

### **Invasive Meningococcal Disease – Important Information**

We are writing to provide important information about invasive meningococcal disease to help you recognise the symptoms and understand how to protect your child.

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria that many people carry harmlessly in the back of their throat. There are several strains, including MenA, MenB, MenC, MenW, MenX, and MenY. While most people do not become unwell, in rare cases the bacteria can cause serious illness.

Meningococcal disease is uncommon but can become very serious if not treated quickly. It can lead to:

- Meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord)
- Septicaemia (a severe bloodstream infection that can lead to organ failure)

How does it spread?

**The infection does not spread easily.** It is usually passed through prolonged close contact, such as:

- Living in the same household
- Prolonged kissing
- Sharing drinks or vapes

It is less contagious than illnesses such as measles or COVID-19.

What you need to do

1. Know the signs and symptoms

Although rare, it is important to seek urgent medical advice if you suspect meningococcal disease.

Symptoms can develop suddenly and may include:

- High temperature (fever)
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Rash that does not fade when pressed (note: a rash is not always present)

- Stiff neck
- Sensitivity to light
- Drowsiness or difficulty waking
- Seizures (fits)

These symptoms can appear in any order, and not all may be present.

For more information, please visit:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/symptoms](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/symptoms)

## 2. Vaccination against meningitis

Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against certain types of meningococcal disease.

The NHS immunisation programme includes:

- MenACWY vaccine: offered to young people aged 13–14 (Year 9), with catch-up available up to age 25
- MenB vaccine: given to babies at 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and 1 year (catch-up available up to age 2 only)

It is important that children and young people are up to date with all routine vaccinations.

You can check your child's vaccination record by:

- Looking at their Personal Child Health Record (Red Book)
- Using the NHS App
- Contacting your GP surgery

If your child has missed any vaccinations, please speak to your GP.

Further information

- NHS: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis)
- UK Health Security Agency: What is meningitis and how to protect yourself
- Meningitis Now: [www.meningitisnow.org](http://www.meningitisnow.org) | 0808 80 10 388
- Meningitis Research Foundation: [www.meningitis.org](http://www.meningitis.org) | 080 8800 3344

If you have any concerns about your child's health, please seek medical advice immediately.

Yours sincerely

Kind regards



Miss Jo Capon  
Headteacher

