

Monday 16 March 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff

Meningitis Outbreak in Canterbury

You may have seen recent news reports regarding cases of meningococcal meningitis affecting people in Canterbury. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) confirmed on Sunday that there has been an outbreak of invasive meningococcal disease in the Canterbury area. Two people have sadly passed away and a number of others are seriously ill in hospital. The outbreak is linked to a social venue, Club Chemistry, in Canterbury. Please see attached letter from the South East Health Protection Team – UK Health Security Agency.

As a school, we are aware of the situation in other parts of the county. We are carefully monitoring it and will provide any relevant updates to parents, carers and staff. While cases such as this remain rare, awareness of the symptoms and acting quickly are the best protection. Please do not hesitate to contact the school office on 01622 743925 if you have any concerns.

Symptoms to watch for:

Meningococcal disease can progress very quickly, but it is treatable with antibiotics if caught early. Symptoms can appear in any order, may not all be present and can initially resemble a bad cold or flu.

Key symptoms include:

- A high fever
- A severe or worsening headache
- A stiff neck
- Sensitivity to bright light
- Drowsiness, confusion, or difficulty waking
- Nausea and vomiting
- Cold hands and feet, limb pain, or pale and mottled skin
- A rash of red or purple spots or blotches that does not fade when you press a glass against it

The glass test:

Press the side of a clear glass firmly against the rash. If the spots do not fade and you can still see them through the glass, this may be a sign of meningococcal septicaemia. Call 999 immediately. On darker skin, check paler areas such as the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, inside the eyelids, or the roof of the mouth.

If your child has symptoms — particularly a combination of fever, headache, and stiff neck, or a rash that does not fade — call 999 or go to your nearest A&E immediately. Do not wait for all symptoms to appear. Do not wait to see if they get better. Early treatment can be lifesaving. If your child does not have symptoms but you are concerned, you can call NHS 111 for advice.

Further information:

NHS meningitis symptoms page: www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/symptoms

GOV.UK meningitis guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-signs-and-symptoms-poster

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Peggy Murphy
Principal