

Using Reception Year as an opportunity to promote vaccination catch-up to parents

A note from the Department for Education:

Reception Year is a great time to remind parents which vaccines children should have been offered. Vaccination protects children from illnesses that could affect their health and attendance in the future. Below, we've provided some messaging developed by the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care that we encourage you to share with parents and carers of your Reception pupils. There's a longer version if you would prefer to provide more information upfront, and a shorter summary if you'd like to include some text in a wider communication about other subjects.

Full text

Vaccinations are given to children before they start school to help protect them from serious childhood diseases.

Your child will meet lots of new children when they start school so it's normal for them to catch illnesses circulating, especially during the colder months when they spend more time indoors. Getting your child vaccinated helps protect them against the preventable diseases that could be circulating.

Vaccination is the safest way to protect your child from diseases like measles and flu, which can make them poorly and, in some cases, can be very serious. They could also miss out on school due to time spent unwell, impacting on their learning and development.

Vaccinating children also helps reduce the chance of others in their family who are higher risk, like grandparents or those with long-term conditions, or younger siblings who aren't yet able to be vaccinated, from catching these infections.

By the time your child starts Reception, they should have been offered the following vaccinations:

- Their baby vaccinations at 8, 12 and 16 weeks:

- **6-in-1 vaccine** (DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB) - which protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis), polio, haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and hepatitis B
- **Rotavirus vaccine** (Rota)
- **MenB vaccine**
- **Pneumococcal vaccine** (PCV)
- Their one-year vaccinations:
 - **Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine**
 - **Pneumococcal vaccine** (PCV)
 - **MenB vaccine**
 - A Hib-containing vaccine
- Their pre-school boosters at 3 years 4 months, including the
 - **4-in-1 booster vaccine** (DTaP/IPV) - which protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis) and polio
 - second **MMR-containing vaccine**

You can see the full schedule of vaccines your child should have been offered by the time they start reception, and when they are offered, at www.nhs.uk/childhoodvaccinations.

As part of settling into school, check that your child has had all their routine vaccinations, including their MMR and pre-school booster vaccines.

If you aren't sure which vaccines your child has had, you can check their Red Book (Personal Child Health Record) or contact your GP practice to see if they've missed any. You can see the full vaccination schedule at: www.nhs.uk/childhoodvaccinations.

If your child has missed a vaccination, don't worry, they can still catch up on most missed vaccines. Contact your GP practice to book a catch-up appointment.

If your child has missed any MMR vaccines, they can still have a vaccine to protect them, but it will now be offered as the MMRV vaccine, to add protection against chickenpox.

If you have questions, your GP practice, school nurse or health visitor can explain which vaccines your child needs, what they protect against and what to expect at the appointment.

Summarised text

Starting school means your child will mix with many new children, making it easier for illnesses to spread – especially in autumn and winter. Vaccination is the safest way to protect them from serious preventable diseases such as measles and flu, helping keep them well and able to learn and develop. It also helps protect family members including grandparents, people with long-term conditions and younger siblings who aren't yet fully vaccinated.

Before Reception, your child should have been offered their baby, one-year, MMR and pre-school booster vaccinations. You can see the full schedule offered before reception at www.nhs.uk/childhoodvaccinations

Children can catch up on most missed vaccinations. Check their Red Book or speak to your GP practice to see if they've missed any and to book a catch-up appointment.