



## Scoil Náisiúnta Bhantiarna Lourdes

*“Mol an óige ‘is tiocfaidh sí”*

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

There has been a case of measles in your child's classroom and your child may have been exposed. If your child has either had measles or has received the measles vaccine when he/she was 12–15 months of age or older, the chance of your child developing measles is extremely low. If, however, your child has not had measles and has not been vaccinated then it is quite possible that they will develop measles.

### *What is measles?*

Measles is a viral illness that begins with a runny nose, chestiness and fever. After 1 to 2 days the typical reddish–brown measles rash appears. It begins around the head and neck and spreads over the rest of the body. It is a blotchy rash with the reddened areas often joining together so that large areas of skin look red. The whites of the eyes are usually reddened and irritated and the infected child is miserable. Symptoms develop about 8 to 12 days after exposure to an infectious person. The child with measles is infectious for 3 to 5 days before and for up to 4 days after the rash appears.

### *Why should I be concerned about measles?*

Most healthy children get over measles without any problems. Some develop complications such as ear infections or pneumonia. More rarely, a child with measles can develop an acute brain inflammation (encephalitis) that can lead to permanent brain damage. Additionally, a very small number

of children develop a lethal brain degeneration that only becomes evident 7 to 10 years after the acute illness.

*What should I do now?*

If your child is normally healthy and has been vaccinated against measles there is no need to worry. If your child has not been vaccinated, bring them for vaccination immediately. This will not guarantee that they will not catch measles this time, but it will protect them from future exposures. If your child has any weakness of their immune system (has had cancer or other immune related problems) let his/her doctor immediately that the/she have been exposed to measles.

*What should I do if I think my child has measles?*

Contact your doctor and arrange for him/her to see the child and confirm the diagnosis. Do not bring the child to the crowded surgery waiting room, as this will just spread the infection further.

*Can my child stay in school?*

Most children with measles are too sick to attend school. Even if your child does not seem too ill, it is important that they stay at home until at least 5 days after the rash appears. This is to prevent further spread of infection to others.

*How can I prevent measles spreading in the family?*

Anyone who has neither had measles nor received the measles vaccine should go to their family doctor to discuss vaccination. Thank you for giving this your attention. Your family doctor and local health clinic will be able to answer any further question that you might have about measles and the measles vaccine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seamus Mac Roibeáird".

James Roberts, Principal