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Re. Meningitis  
Ref 201202036

21 April 2026

Dear parents, carers, student or young person

**Please discuss this letter with your child**

We are writing to update you following our recent letter about a cluster of meningitis B (MenB) in the Weymouth area.

There have been 3 recent cases of MenB among young people who attend secondary schools in Weymouth. All are receiving treatment and are recovering well.

These cases are not linked to the recent MenB outbreak in Kent.

Close contacts of all cases have been identified and are being offered antibiotics. Please be reassured that the risk to others is very small. There remains no reason for students or staff to make any change in the school routine and no reason for students to be kept at home, unless they have been directly advised otherwise.

The cases attend two different secondary schools in Weymouth. This may mean that this strain of MenB bacteria is transmitting more widely among young people in Weymouth, which is why additional precautions are now being taken.

**As our previous letter explained, UKHSA is recommending a single dose of antibiotics and a two-course dose of MenB vaccine be offered to young people who live or go to school in the Weymouth area, as follows:**

- Anyone who lives in Weymouth or Portland or Chickerell and is in current school years 7 to 13 (or equivalent), or anyone not in full time education who would be in one of these year groups

OR

- Anyone who attends an educational setting in the Weymouth, Portland or Chickerell area and is in current school years 7 to 13 (or equivalent).

Eligible students will be offered the antibiotic and vaccination in stages.

**Eligible pupils who attend Coastland College (both campuses) will be offered their first dose of the vaccine and their dose of antibiotic on Friday 24 April during school hours.**

- All children and young people should continue to attend school as normal. There is **no need for anyone to remain off school**, or for any events to be postponed or cancelled.
- If you are not in the groups described above, you do **not** currently need to receive the antibiotic

### **How to access the antibiotic.**

Eligible pupils will be given the antibiotic on Friday 24 April 2026.

The antibiotic will be given on the Weymouth campus (Cranford Avenue Weymouth Dorset, DT4 7LQ) during college hours.

## **Antibiotic**

### **A) Antibiotics Consent Form**

The antibiotics consent form is attached with this message:

1. Please print the form, **sign it**, and give it to your child to take to school.
2. If you cannot access a printer:
  - a. Paper copies will be available at your child's school.
  - b. **Please sign the form** and give it to your child on the day of the scheduled visit, if possible.
  - c. If you are unable to complete a signed paper consent form on your child's scheduled day, you may attend one of our evening sessions to attend with your child

Parents do not need to accompany their child to receive the antibiotic but do need to sign the consent form.

NHS staff will provide your child with a single 'one off' dose of the antibiotic.

### **What medication will be provided?**

The antibiotic your child will be given is called ciprofloxacin, which is frequently used to treat lots of different conditions. They will be provided with a single dose of 500mg for young adults and children over 12, or 250mg for children under 12 years old. This antibiotic will kill the bacteria if they are carrying them in their nose and throat.

They will receive either one or two tablets of ciprofloxacin. It is taken by mouth as a one-off dose with a glass of water. It is important to drink plenty of fluids for the rest of the day after taking this antibiotic.

A single dose of ciprofloxacin is very safe, but you can find out more information about it at <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/ciprofloxacin/about-ciprofloxacin/>

Your child should not take the tablet if they have taken antacid/indigestion medicines or preparations containing iron or mineral supplements within the last 4 hours. Please tell the doctor or nurse if this is the case.

Please also tell the doctor or nurse if your child is:

- allergic to ciprofloxacin
- has a history of epilepsy or G6PD deficiency

so that they can arrange an alternative medicine.

You should also avoid drinking alcohol with this medication as it may make you drowsy, affecting your ability to drive or operate machinery. Ciprofloxacin does not interfere with the contraceptive pill. If you are unclear or would like further information, please speak to the NHS staff on site, or contact your GP or pharmacist.

## **Vaccine**

### **B) MenB (Meningitis B) Vaccine Consent Form**

- Consent for the MenB vaccine will be completed online only via the Cinnamon electronic consent platform.
- This is the same system used for consenting to the influenza (flu) vaccination in the autumn term. Please look out for an email from your school asking you to complete consent via this process.
- There is no paper consent form for the MenB vaccination.

Note - If for any reason the online system is not ready for our visits on Thursday consent forms will be emailed to you for printing off and completion and bring back to school. For those unable to print and complete the forms, paper versions will be available at the school

### **How can I access the vaccine**

Eligible pupils of Coastland College (both campuses) will be given the first dose of the vaccine on Friday 24 April 2026.

The first dose of the vaccine will be given on the Weymouth Campus (Cranford Avenue Weymouth Dorset, DT4 7LQ) during college hours.

We will follow up with information for the second dose of the vaccine in the next few weeks. A second dose is needed to make sure the vaccine is effective.

### **What is the vaccination I will receive?**

The name of the vaccine is Bexsero. Bexsero is a vaccine that helps protect against most strains of *Neisseria meningitidis* group B (MenB) bacteria. These bacteria can cause meningitis (an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). It has been used in the UK routine immunisation programme for babies since 2015 and has led to 75% reduction in MenB disease in vaccinated groups.

You need **two doses** of the vaccine for protection. The second dose must be given at least four weeks after the first dose but can be given later. The vaccine is given by injection usually in the upper arm.

### **Does the vaccine have any side-effects?**

It is common to get some swelling, redness or tenderness where you have the injection. You may also get a mild fever, nausea, headache or muscle aches but these symptoms should disappear after 1 or 2 days.

More serious side effects are rare. You can take over the counter pain medication such as paracetamol to manage these symptoms if needed.

Any side effects are usually very mild, but the vaccine may make you feel a bit unwell for a short time, **but it's really important you completed the two doses** as one dose alone is not effective

### **How long will it take for the vaccine to protect me?**

It takes at least 2 weeks from your second dose of vaccine for your body to produce antibodies to give you a good level of protection.

### **I've already had the Men ACWY vaccine, do I still need this?**

Yes. The MenACWY vaccine does not protect against MenB, which is the strain involved in this outbreak.

**We have attached a guide to the Men B vaccine for your information.**

## **Meningitis**

### **Am I at risk?**

The risk of getting meningitis B is very low. The bacteria that cause this disease are very common: at any time about 1 in 10 of us has them in our nose or throat without ever knowing they are there, and for most of us this is harmless. We pass the bacteria between each other by very close or regular close contact with other people. Even when this happens, most of us will not become ill because we have natural immunity. The bacteria do not naturally live or survive for long outside the human body.

We are offering the antibiotic and vaccination to young people in Weymouth, Portland and Chickerell as a precautionary measure to help reduce the risk of further cases in the area.

### **Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease**

It's important everyone is alert to the signs and symptoms of meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia. Get medical help immediately if you or someone you know experiences these symptoms - call NHS 111 for urgent advice, or 999 in a medical emergency.

- a rash that doesn't fade when pressed with a glass
- sudden onset of high fever
- severe and worsening headache
- stiff neck
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- joint and muscle pain
- dislike of bright lights
- very cold hands and feet
- seizures
- confusion/delirium
- extreme sleepiness/difficulty waking.

## **Routine prevention**

It is important that everyone is **up to date with routine vaccinations**, including the MenACWY vaccine, where applicable. The full UK routine schedule is available here: [Complete routine immunisation schedule from 1 January 2026 - GOV.UK](#)  
It is fine to have both the MenACWY and MenB vaccines either on the same day or on different days.

## **Additional information**

We understand that this situation may cause concern within school communities, particularly given the recent meningitis B outbreak incident in Kent. Students should continue to attend school as normal and there should be no change to their usual routines.

If you would like further advice or support, both the Meningitis Research Foundation and Meningitis Now are available:

- The Meningitis Research Foundation, [www.meningitis.org](http://www.meningitis.org) telephone: 0808 800 3344
- Meningitis Now, [www.meningitisnow.org](http://www.meningitisnow.org) telephone: 0808 80 10 388 helpline email address: [helpline@meningitisnow.org](mailto:helpline@meningitisnow.org)

Anyone who becomes unwell with symptoms of meningitis or septicaemia should seek medical help urgently at the closest Accident and Emergency Department or by dialling 999. If you're not sure if your symptoms are serious, use [NHS 111 online](#) or call 111 to find out what to do.

You can find out more about meningitis here:

- [What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself – UK Health Security Agency](#)
- [Information for education settings in England regarding the meningococcal disease outbreak - GOV.UK](#)

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully

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