



26 June 2017

Dear Headteacher

**Re: Meningococcal ACWY vaccination (MenACWY)**

The 2017 school leaver cohort (teenagers born between 01/09/1998 to 31/08/1999) is now eligible for urgent catch-up with MenACWY vaccination. These young people should be **invited by their GP practice** for vaccination over the coming months.

We are writing to request your help in raising awareness of the vaccine prior to the summer break, and encouraging students to take up the vaccination when it's offered by their GP.

The vaccine helps protect those immunised against meningococcal disease which can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). These conditions can kill in hours and those who recover may be left severely disabled.

Since 2009, there has been a large increase in group W meningococcal (MenW) disease in England, resulting in several deaths in teenagers. Older teenagers and young adults who are not vaccinated are at risk of getting MenW infection, so need to get vaccinated. The vaccine also helps protect others around them. These students may have had a MenC vaccination but still require the MenACWY vaccine as this gives the extra protection needed. The vaccination is free and may save their life.

Your current students in the age cohort outlined should take up the vaccination when offered – whether going into work or higher education. Those planning to go to university should be vaccinated well **before** starting their course. New university students are at extra risk of meningococcal infection in the first weeks of term when they come into contact with many new people of a similar age.

Finally, if students are not up to date with the **MMR vaccine** which helps protect against measles mumps and rubella, they should get this at the same appointment. More information about both vaccines can be found at the NHS Choices website or through speaking to the nurse or GP at their surgery.

A new leaflet is available to assist you in encouraging vaccination and can be downloaded and printed, using 'product code' MENACWY001, from:  
[https://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk/ecom\\_dh/public/contact.jsf](https://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk/ecom_dh/public/contact.jsf).

Thank you for your help in protecting young people from these devastating diseases.

Yours faithfully

Centre Director – PHE West Midlands

Screening and Immunisation Lead