Parents/Guardians of Kidder County School children –

With outbreaks of measles infections occurring throughout the US, we feel the need to inform parents of what will happen when a case of measles occurs within the school. As of 2/17/2026, over 900 cases have been identified in the US, this year so far – six cases in ND (which are not all associated with each other) and multiple on the SD border.

In the event a case of the measles is identified within the school:

-All children and staff who have not had any doses of MMR or hx of disease will be excluded from school **AND**
-This exclusion will exist for 21 days after the LAST case of measles has been identified in the school. 21 days reflects the incubation period of the virus. The school and local health department will work with the local health officer and state health department to determine when everyone can return to school.

These actions are within compliance of Century Code 23-07-17.6:
"When, in the opinion of the health officer, danger of an epidemic exists from any of the communicable diseases for which immunization is required under this section, the exemptions from immunization against such disease may not be recognized and children not immunized must be excluded from an institution listed in subsection 1 until, in the opinion of the health officer, the danger of the epidemic is over. The designated institution authority shall notify those parents or guardians taking legal exception to the immunization requirements that their children are excluded from school during an epidemic as determined by the department of health and human services."

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness - it is spread through the air by coughing/sneezing with very small droplets. These droplets remain in the air for 2 hours. Symptoms include a rash, fever, and flu-like symptoms – serious complications can occur and include pneumonia, seizures, and brain swelling that can lead to lifelong deafness or intellectual disabilities. There is no treatment for measles other than helping symptoms through rest, hydration, and over the counter medications.

The measles vaccine is a required vaccination for school and is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Overall, rates of vaccination have declined due to exemptions– in the US and in our county – so an outbreak in our community could happen. To have "herd immunity" (meaning those who are vaccinated will protect those not and prevent spread) a minimal vaccination rate of 95% must exist. There are varying rates within each grade level in our school – overall up to date rate in Kidder County school is 89.6%, with elementary school at 85.7%, high school at 95.1%. County wide – only 81.4% of children 1-19 are up to date on MMR. If your child does not have any doses or needs to be caught up: call any pediatric doctor office or Kidder County District Health Unit in Steele, ND. Please call 475-2582 to schedule.

For more information about measles and other communicable diseases, please call your child's PCP or visit www.health.nd.gov/diseases-conditions or kiddercountyhealth.com.

Signed together in good faith,

Tricia Steinke, RN
KCDHU, DON
School health liaison

Mandy Rath, FNP, RN
Four Seasons Wellness
Local Nurse Practitioner

Dr. David Field
Local Health Officer
Sanford Health

Rick Diegel
Superintendent
Kidder County School

Public Health
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