

Department of Health and Human Services

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION UNIT

GPO Box 125, HOBART TAS 7001 Australia

Web: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au



Dear Parents and Carers

Subject: Meningococcal Disease

We were notified on 14 August 2017 that a student who attends Sheffield School was diagnosed with meningococcal disease.

Public Health Services has contacted the families of the students who had close contact with the student.

It is very unlikely that another student or staff member at the school will develop meningococcal disease. However, because meningococcal disease is a serious condition, it is important to be aware of the symptoms. Recognising and treating it early can be lifesaving. Symptoms of meningococcal disease include fever, headache, neck stiffness, vomiting, chills, rash, muscle and joint pains, and abdominal pain. Symptoms in babies include fever, rapid breathing, rash, vomiting, irritability, drowsiness and paleness.

All students can continue to attend school and other school and sporting activities.

For more information about meningococcal disease, there is a *Meningococcal Disease* fact sheet at:

http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/communicable_diseases_prevention_unit/infectious_diseases/meningococcal_disease. Or you can ring the Public Health Hotline - Tasmania on 1800 671 738 to speak to a Clinical Nurse Consultant.

A free Meningococcal W Vaccination Program has started in Tasmania for all teenagers aged 15 to 19 years. The vaccine will be offered to Sheffield School students in years 10, 11 and 12. Please ensure consent forms are signed and returned. For teenagers who have left school, free vaccine is available from their GP from 1 August 2017 to 30 April 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Mark Veitch
Director of Public Health
16 August 2017