# Immunisation School Lead: Role description

Schools and education settings have a vital role to play in educating future generations about the importance of immunisation to support health, supporting the delivery of the routine immunisation programme and providing leadership in managing outbreaks of infectious disease within schools.

Immunisation programmes are delivered in schools because:

* Vaccination provides protection against disease: A full dose of vaccination generally provides immunity similar to that provided by the natural infection, but without the risk of the disease or its complications.
* It is an effective public health intervention: We know from the World Health Organization (WHO) that the two public health interventions that have had the greatest impact on the world’s health are clean water and vaccines[[1]](#footnote-1)
* There is a direct positive impact on health: When children and young people receive all the vaccinations included in the routine childhood immunisation programme, this has a direct positive impact on their health and wellbeing, as well as their communities.
* There is a direct positive impact on education: Education is extremely important for a child or young person’s health and wellbeing and high-quality face-to-face education is always preferable. Children will have fewer sickness absence or exclusion periods from school.
* It reduces transmission and outbreaks: Achieving high levels of immunity against vaccine preventable diseases is vital to reduce the spread of infection and prevent outbreaks.
* There are wider community benefits: High levels of immunity can result in herd immunity, whereby the protection from immunisation programmes extends to individuals who cannot be vaccinated for a number of reasons (e.g. children with weakened immune systems)
* It reduces avoidable differences in health: Evidence shows that delivering immunisations in schools reduces health disparities by making access to vaccines easier for all, for example parents don’t need to take time off work to book immunisation appointments and children who are not registered with a GP are included. It also offers an important opportunity to check children are up to date with routine immunisations and to ensure they are caught up.

School Age Immunisation Services (SAIS) providers are commissioned by NHS England (NHSE) to deliver the school-based immunisation programmes. They will work in partnership with schools to deliver this programme. There are a number of school-based immunisation programmes whose success depends on close working relationships between the schools, school nurses and SAIS providers. For each school, it is helpful if there is a lead member of staff responsible for managing this relationship and for providing leadership to create and manage a positive environment which enhances emotional and physical health in school through the delivery of the routine school-age immunisation programme.

Occasionally clusters and outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, hepatitis A and meningococcal disease are linked to children and young people settings. The Immunisation Lead will play a leadership role here.

## Key responsibilities

This role description covers the key responsibilities for an Immunisation School Lead:

1. **Leadership and education about vaccination**
* Creating and managing an education environment where children learn about the role that vaccination plays in preventing a range of infections. (This may be supported through the [UKHSA e-bug programme](https://www.e-bug.eu/home) from KS2 onwards).
* Create and manage an education environment where staff are up to date with their vaccinations. This will involve encouraging all staff to check their immunisation records and contact their GP practice if they are unsure and need to catch-up. In particular:
	+ All staff should make sure that they have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.
	+ The hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for staff who are involved in the care of individuals with severe learning disability or challenging behaviour who live in institutional accommodation.
* Creating and managing an education environment where parents and carer’s are informed about routine vaccinations offered through school. This will involve sharing information leaflets and consent forms with parents or carers and signposting to the SAIS for vaccine hesitant families who would like to have further conversations.
1. **Improving student and community health through supporting uptake of routine immunisation programme**
* Building the relationship between the school and their School Age Immunisation Provider to develop an effective partnership.
* Ensuring all eligible students are enabled and supported to take up the offer of immunisation programmes by:
	+ providing a list of eligible children and young people and their parent or carer’s contact details to the School Age Immunisation team
	+ providing space and time in the timetable for vaccination
	+ reminding staff, children, and young people about the date of the immunisation session(s)
* Link with the Healthy School Borough Lead to keep informed of developments
1. **Leadership in managing vaccine-preventable outbreaks within the school**
* Encouraging all people who are unwell not to attend the setting or remain separate from others, wherever possible – further guidance on exclusion periods is available for specific infectious diseases
* Requesting that parents, carers or students inform the setting of a diagnosis of any infectious disease
* Schools should notified to your UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health protection team (HPT) promptly if there is a suspected outbreak
* Working with your local Health Protection Team to support them to conduct a risk assessment to assess the size and nature of outbreaks and follow recommended actions. These may include offering vaccination to all persons in the setting. This will require the setting to support with clear and prompt communication with parents/carers and rapid coordination of arrangements.
1. [Immunisation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)