**Sample messages: Encouraging the measles immunization with parents and guardians**

School faculty and staff know that communicating with parents and guardians on sensitive issues can be challenging. With more than 1,000 measles cases nationwide, including more than 700 cases in neighboring Texas, public health officials are urging schools to encourage vaccination among their students through outreach to families.

To assist with that effort, the Oklahoma Alliance for Healthy Families, in partnership with OU Health, the Oklahoma State Medical Association and other healthcare advocates have provided a toolkit for schools to use for easy outreach.

The sample emails below are one part of the toolkit. Please use these as you deem beneficial, trusting that they have been vetted by public health officials in the interest of protecting your school from a costly and dangerous measles outbreak.   
  
  
  
[Email #1  
Sample email with Oklahoma State Department of Health link]

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On average, one in five measles patients will require hospitalization, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A measles outbreak has spread nationwide, with more than 1,000 cases, including cases in Oklahoma. On average, 1 in 5 people who contract measles require hospitalization. Sadly, there have already been three fatal cases of measles, two of which were in unvaccinated, school-age children, in addition to an unvaccinated adult.

**To protect our school and students from a costly and dangerous measles outbreak, we are asking families to check with their child’s pediatrician to ensure students are up to date on immunizations - particularly the MMR vaccination.**

The MMR immunization is safe and 97% effective when both doses of the vaccine are administered properly. Most children are vaccinated between 12 and 15 months of age, and again at 4 to 6 years of age, but many pediatricians are advising early immunization due to the outbreak.

If your child has missed a well child check or you have previously opted out of immunizations, now is an ideal time to talk with your pediatrician. We hope you will consider doing so this summer, as we prepare for a healthy school year when we return to our classrooms in August.

**Where to find the MMR immunization**

The MMR immunization is available at doctors offices and clinics, as well as through the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Find out about accessing immunization records and free resources at <https://shorturl.at/wyBQf>.

[Email #2  
Sample email addressing exemptions and with talking points]

Dear Families,

As we prepare for summer vacation, student safety remains a top concern. We look forward to welcoming back our returning students in the fall. Public health experts are warning of the measles outbreak our country is experiencing with summer travel and camp experiences in mind.

The MMR immunization is safe and 97% effective when properly administered. Immunization is the single best way to protect your child from measles, which can cause lifelong complications and has a one-in-five hospitalization rate. Children are the leading group of measles patients right now, with more than 1,000 total cases nationwide. Sadly three individuals, including two unvaccinated school-age children and an unvaccinated adult, have died from measles this year.

As measles makes a resurgence, now is a good time to check if your child has been immunized.

Every parent and guardian makes informed decisions for the children in their care. Although medical, religious and personal immunization exemptions are allowed for all Oklahoma students, they are not recommended.

Three reasons to immunize your child:

* **Protect your child**: Measles can cause lifelong complications and often requires hospitalization. Immunizations offer the best protection against illness medicine can offer. Countless lives have been saved because of immunizations.
* **Stop the spread**: Childhood illnesses like polio, mumps and measles used to kill thousands of children each year but immunizations have stopped the spread.
* **Protect those who cannot be immunized**: Babies too young to be vaccinated, immunocompromised individuals and others who cannot be immunized rely on others to be healthy around them.

Stop the spread this summer by talking with your doctor or visiting a local walk-in clinic. If your child missed a well child check before kindergarten, it is possible they did not receive the recommended second dose of the MMR immunization and are therefore missing out on the full protection offered by the vaccine. The first dose is given between 12-15 months of age but some pediatricians are now recommending early immunization because of the outbreak.

Have a safe and happy summer!