

## Great Falls Public Schools

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This letter is to inform you that Cascade City-County Health Department has identified confirmed cases of mumps in Montana and confirmed cases of measles in the region. The Health Department is working with Great Falls Public Schools to prevent these illnesses in our community.

The Cascade City-County Health Department is following the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for mumps and measles follow-up in schools. Health department staff is working closely with Great Falls Public Schools staff to identify students who are most susceptible of contracting mumps and/or measles in order to take infection control measures to limit the spread of the diseases.

It is important for parents to know that most students have significant protection against mumps and measles through immunizations required by Montana state law and recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While these diseases can have some serious potential side effects, the risk of these outcomes is significantly reduced by the vaccine and infection control precautions being pursued by the Health Department and the schools.

Parents of children who may be most susceptible to mumps and measles will be notified by staff from Cascade City-County Health Department, who will provide information and health care guidance. In most cases, students who are most susceptible are those who have not been vaccinated against these diseases. The Cascade City-County Health Department is working closely with school staff to identify students in the schools who are not vaccinated against mumps. Two doses of the MMR vaccine are required for attendance in Montana schools, unless an exemption has been filed. Students and staff who have two doses of vaccine are considered protected.

As mumps have been confirmed in Montana, please note the following:

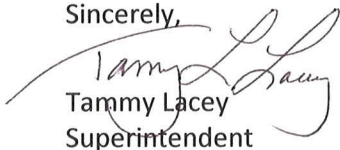
- Mumps is a viral illness which can cause swelling of the salivary glands along the neck, face or jaw, high fever, body aches and headaches.
- Less than 1% of mumps cases have serious complications such as encephalitis, meningitis, deafness or pancreatitis.
- There is no cure for mumps but supportive treatment such as temperature/fever control, fluids and rest will help.

If you think you or your child has symptoms consistent with mumps, please keep them home and call your healthcare provider even if your child has been vaccinated. While the vaccine is very effective, it does not provide 100% protection. Since there are other viruses that can cause swelling of the face or neck, it is important to get properly diagnosed. Testing for mumps will help manage the spread of this disease in our community.

The health department will be monitoring for local cases of mumps and states cases of measles, and may take additional actions to limit spread of the diseases. These actions may include exclusion of students who have been exposed to the disease and who have religious or medical exemptions from the vaccine that protects against mumps and measles. If excluded, students may be out of school for 25 days or more, depending on the course of the outbreak. If students receive one dose of the MMR vaccine they are not likely to be excluded from school due to reduced risk for infection, as outlined in CDC guidance.

Please contact your school principal directly if you have questions. More information can be found on the GFPS Student Wellness webpage at [www.studentwellnessgfps.weebly.com](http://www.studentwellnessgfps.weebly.com)

Sincerely,

  
Tammy Lacey  
Superintendent