*Dear Colleagues*,

*The Department for Education and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have become aware that some early education settings are temporarily excluding children who have recently been vaccinated, even if they feel well enough to attend. This statement from a UKHSA health protection expert explains why such policies are unnecessary and can have serious unintended consequences for children and the early years settings they attend.*

***Dr Mary Ramsay, Director of Public Health Programmes at the UK Health Security Agency, said:***

*“Vaccinations are vital for protecting children against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases. With measles outbreaks occurring in areas of the UK and cases of whooping cough being reported, it's more important than ever that children receive their routine immunisations on schedule.*

*While some children may experience mild side effects after vaccination, there is absolutely no medical reason to exclude a vaccinated child from a setting if they are feeling well. This practice could potentially discourage parents from getting their children vaccinated and therefore increase the risk of having outbreaks in nurseries and schools.*

*All medicines can cause side effects, but global health authorities agree that immunisation is the safest way to protect children's health. If a parent or carer feels their child is well enough to attend nursery or school after vaccination, they should be welcomed as normal.*

*There is no reason to exclude children who have been recently vaccinated as vaccine viruses cannot spread to others.*

*By supporting childhood vaccination and maintaining inclusive and evidence-led policies, early years and education settings play a crucial role in protecting not just individual children, but entire communities from preventable diseases.”*

*DfE and UKHSA encourage you to help protect the health of children, members of staff and your wider community by checking that your attendance policy does not unnecessarily exclude children who have recently been vaccinated.*

Kind regards,

Hannah Brabham

(DfE Rapid Response and Emergency Planning Division)