

Covid-19 Vaccination

Parent information pack for
the 2nd Phase of the
programme

Dear Parent/ Carer

As many of you will be aware via national and local news on the 29th November 2021 the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland recommended a second dose of a Covid vaccine for all children aged 12 to 15. The CMOs made this decision following consultation with several independent experts from a range of clinical and public health professions across the UK including the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Doctors of Public Health, and representatives from the JCVI (Joint committee on vaccinations and immunisations). They also reviewed data from the Office for National Statistics and published data on the impact of COVID-19 on education.

Vaccination of these age groups has already helped reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools. As we now know, COVID-19 is a disease which can be very effectively transmitted by mass spreading events, especially with Delta variant, with the newly discovered Omicron variant seemingly even more transmissible. Having a significant proportion of pupils vaccinated is likely to reduce the probability of such events which are likely to cause local outbreaks in, or associated with, schools. They will also reduce the chance an individual child gets COVID-19. This means vaccination is likely to reduce (but not eliminate) education disruption. The additional likely benefits of reducing educational disruption, and the consequent reduction in public health harm from educational disruption, on balance provide sufficient extra advantage in addition to the marginal advantage at an individual level identified by the JCVI to recommend in favour of vaccinating all 12–15-year-olds with a single dose of a covid-19 vaccination.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19>

Following the above recommendation, the School-aged immunisation team will be visiting all secondary schools across Buckinghamshire over the Spring term to offer all students aged 12 – 15 years a first, second or third dose of Covid-19 vaccine, depending on their current Covid 19 immunisation history. The vaccine administered will be Comirnaty (Pfizer). No vaccines will be administered without valid consent (see consent section for further details). Consent will be captured via our electronic consent system which requires you to enter your schools unique code, which will be emailed via the school. The vaccine is currently not licensed in the UK for anyone less than 12 years, therefore pupils in Year 7, who reach their 12th birthday after the school session will be eligible to receive the vaccine at either the Mass Vaccination Centre, participating community pharmacies and GP surgeries.

Yours sincerely

Buckinghamshire School-aged Immunisation Team

Covid-19 Vaccine

All children aged 12-15 will be offered another dose of Comirnaty (Pfizer).

Immunisation is a cornerstone of public health. It is one of the most successful and cost-effective health protection interventions and high immunisation rates are key to preventing the spread of infectious disease, complications and possible early death among individuals. High immunisation rates are also vital in protecting the population's health through both individual and herd immunity.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe. Further information is available on symptoms on NHS.UK.

The vaccines do not contain organisms that grow in the body, and so are safe for children and young people with disorders of the immune system. These people may not respond so well to the vaccine, but it should offer them protection against severe disease.

Side Effects

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-lived, and not everyone gets them. With the vaccine we use in under-18s, side effects are more common with the second dose.

Very common side effects include:

- painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm at injection site
- feeling tired
- headache
- general aches, or mild flu like symptoms

The above can be safely managed by plenty of fluids, home remedies such as Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen (following the dosing instructions) and moving the arm. They usually resolve within 24-48 hours.

Less common side effects:

Following administration of Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine to protect against Covid 19 there have been very rare reports of the following side effects and usually a few days after the second dose:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Feelings of having a fast beating or pounding heart

Most symptoms are short-lived and will resolve spontaneously with some rest and simple treatments. However, should your son/daughter experience any of these symptoms, and you are concerned, please contact your GP or NHS111 and explain that he/she has recently been vaccinated with Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine. More information about the Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccination can be found here: [COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for eligible children and young people aged 12 to 17 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-eligible-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-17)

- Help them with strategies for staying calm during the vaccination – it's natural to worry but we want your arm to be as relaxed as possible
- Let your child know what's going to happen in simple language – for example, "you may feel a sharp scratch that will go away very fast"

Sharing personal and health information

The school-aged immunisation service is part of the NHS, to fulfil our function we need and record personal and health information for children and young people who access our services. This helps us treat them now and in the future. The information relating to your child's vaccination status will be added to the national database, which ultimately feeds into his/her GP records to help them provide the individual with the best care possible. However, we only provide appropriate information required to support their care and treatment. As an NHS Trust we are governed by and compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Schools have the legal right* to release personal information to us, so we can assure that everyone eligible and their parents or carers have been given the information and opportunity to be vaccinated. It is important to understand the risks of not being vaccinated, and have a chance to ask any questions about vaccination.

*Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), schools can provide non-sensitive student data with or without consent from parents. Article 6 (1) (e) states that "the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law." GDPR also governs how the information is stored, managed and processed. This relates to sensitive information such as ethnicity, whether a child has Special Educational Needs, and pupil premium.

To find out more about how we may use personal information, please see the Buckinghamshire Privacy notice [Privacy notice - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust \(buckshealthcare.nhs.uk\)](https://buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/privacy-notice)

Covid-19 Vaccine FAQs

Where can I find information on COVID-19 vaccination for children and adults?

The [NHS leaflets](#) provide more information for parents and children on the vaccine, including how it works and what to expect after COVID-19 vaccination. There are accessible versions of the consent form and leaflets available for those with a learning disability or who live with autism. There are braille and British Sign Language (BSL) videos to order or download. Translations will also be available.

[COVID-19 vaccination – A guide for children and young people \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-children-and-young-people.pdf)

[What to expect after your COVID-19 vaccination – Advice for children and young people \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/what-to-expect-after-your-covid-19-vaccination-advice-for-children-and-young-people.pdf)

When do the vaccinations need to be given?

The COVID-19 vaccinations for children aged 12-15 will commence in January 2022 and will run across all secondary schools during the Spring term. You will be provided with the date of your child's planned school session.

It is important to note that during the Spring term the immunisation team will also be offering the HPV vaccination to students in year 8 and 9.

Further information about the HPV vaccine is available here:

[HPV vaccine overview - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Who will be giving the vaccine to the children?

The programme will be delivered by an NHS commissioned School-aged Immunisation team (SAI) which will include nurses, healthcare support workers, administrative staff, and other associated professionals who specialise in the delivery of school age vaccinations. The team will administer the vaccination according to nationally agreed standards. Staff are appropriately qualified, trained (including in safeguarding) and experienced in vaccinating children and young people. Staff administering the vaccine will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

What about those children turning 12 years of age within the school year, after the date of the vaccination session?

The vaccine is currently not licensed in the UK for anyone less than 12 years, therefore pupils in Year 7, who reach their 12th birthday after the school session will be eligible to receive the vaccine at either the Mass Vaccination Centre, participating community pharmacies and GP surgeries.

How to contact us

The Buckinghamshire School Aged Immunisation team covers every school in Buckinghamshire:

Call: **01494 323000**

Email: buc-tr.BucksChildImms@nhs.net

<http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/School-nursing/immunisations.htm>

