

Shropshire Community Health 
NHS Trust

31st January 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 12 to 17 years of age

The NHS is offering COVID-19 vaccine to children and young people, following advice from the 4 UK Chief Medical Officers and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. All young people aged 12 to 17 will be offered **a second dose** of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

Secondary school-aged children aged 12 to 17 years old on the date of the vaccination clinic will be offered **first** or **second** doses of the vaccine in School.

This vaccination programme is in place to help protect your child against coronavirus (COVID-19), reduce transmission in schools and keep pupils in the classroom. Vaccinating your child will help protect more vulnerable friends and family by preventing COVID-19 from spreading. The vaccination is free and will be given by our COVID-19 Vaccination Team in collaboration with the School-Aged Immunisation Service (SAIS), who will be responsible for ensuring children receive their vaccination in schools.

Please note:

- **the second dose should be administered at least 12 WEEKS after the first dose on the day the Vaccination Clinic held at your school**
- **if your child is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) or lives with someone who is CEV then the second dose should be administered at least 8 weeks after the first dose**
- **if your child has had COVID-19 they should wait 12 WEEKS after a positive PCR test to have any vaccines.**

Please complete the attached consent form, (one for each child) for either a first or second dose, detach from the letter and return the completed consent form to the school no later than **two days prior to the date of the vaccination clinic** to ensure your child receives their vaccination. Out of school clinics will be available for children aged 12-17 to access if they do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine in school, these can be booked online via [national booking system](#), by calling NHS 119 or by visiting a local [walk-in clinic](#).

Please inform the school if you have sent a consent form in for your child to be vaccinated but then decide to get them vaccinated prior to the vaccination clinic being held at your school. A vaccine will have been allocated to your child that day and will be wasted if this isn't communicated prior to the visit.

Children and young people aged 16 or 17 on the date of the school vaccination clinic can get vaccinated in school **or by booking an appointment [online](#), calling NHS 119 or [by visiting a local walk-in clinic](#)**. Parental consent is not required. However, if a young person aged 16 or 17 wishes to have their vaccine in school, please complete the consent form (which can be completed by themselves) and return to school 2 days prior to vaccine to ensure that the SAIS can plan and bring enough vaccine on the day.

For further information on Covid-19 vaccination for children and young people please see [here](#). Frequently asked questions and answers can be seen on the next page.

In the meantime, should you have any concerns, please do get in touch by emailing: shropcom.immunisationteam@nhs.net.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Ellis
Service Director and Deputy Senior Responsible Officer
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Covid Vaccination Service

If you decide you do not want to vaccinate your child against Covid-19 (coronavirus), please return the form indicating **No consent**. This will help us plan and improve the service.

Information about COVID-19 vaccines is available at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine.

Updated 17th December 2021:

Why you should have your child vaccinated

While coronavirus (COVID-19) is typically mild or asymptomatic in most young people it can be very unpleasant for some. A course of vaccine will provide good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation.

Vaccinating 12 to 15 year olds should also help to reduce the need for young people to have time-off school and reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools.

The COVID-19 secondary schools vaccine programme should therefore provide protection to young people and reduce the disruption to face-to-face education. This will help to keep young people emotionally well and happier and this was an important [consideration](#) for the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs).

The COVID-19 vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine helps to reduce the chance of COVID-19 infection and provides good protection against serious disease. It may take a few weeks to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine.

Is it safe for young people?

The medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), has confirmed the Pfizer vaccine is safe and effective for 12 to 17 year olds. This followed a rigorous review of the safety, quality and effectiveness of the vaccines in this age group.

The UK has also benefited from having data from the US, Canada and Israel, which have already offered vaccines universally to young people aged 12 to 15 years.

These 2 videos from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) explain this in more detail: [video 1](#) and [video 2](#).

Where you can you more information on the COVID-19 vaccine

The [NHS leaflets](#) provide more information for parents and young people 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. We have braille and British Sign Language (BSL) videos to order or download. Translations are also available.

If your child has tested positive for COVID-19

Your child should not attend a vaccination session or appointment either at school or at a centre if they have tested positive for COVID-19. They should self-isolate and wait for 12 weeks before having their first or second dose. Children who are at increased risk, should wait 4 weeks from a positive test result, before having their vaccine.

If your child does not get the vaccine on the day it is offered in the school

For any young people aged 12 to 17 years who do not receive their vaccine on the vaccine day, a Covid-19 vaccination can be booked online via [national booking system](#), by calling NHS 119 or by visiting a local [walk-in clinic](#).

Consent

How the consent process works

All parents, or those with parental responsibility, are asked for consent and will usually make this decision jointly with their children. The information leaflet is addressed to the child (as the recipient of the vaccine) and encourages them to discuss the decision about the vaccine with their parents.

In secondary schools, some young people may be mature enough to provide their own consent. This sometimes occurs if a parent has not returned a consent form but the child still wishes to have the vaccine on the day of the session. Every effort will be made to contact the parent to seek their verbal consent.

This is a well-established process which you will be familiar with from other school-based vaccination programmes.

Who decides whether a young person can give their own consent?

In secondary schools, some young people will be mature enough to provide their own consent. Healthcare professionals from the schools immunisation team will speak to the young person and make every effort to contact the parent. These professionals have expertise in vaccinating young people and will be responsible for assessing whether they have enough understanding to self-consent (this is called 'Gillick competence').

This is a well-established process which you will be familiar with from other school-based vaccination programmes.

The [Green Book of Immunisation](#) contains more information on consent including Gillick competence.

Can parents refuse to have their child vaccinated?

Yes. The vaccine is not mandatory. Parents will be asked to give their consent for the vaccine. Young people may express a wish to have the vaccine and may have the capacity to provide informed consent themselves. Parents should be encouraged to speak to their children ahead of time so that there is agreement on consent in advance of the vaccination session.

If no consent is received, and the young person is not Gillick competent or does not want to be vaccinated, the immunisation will not proceed.

What happens if a parent has not consented, but the young person wants to be vaccinated?

Young people who understand fully what is involved in a proposed procedure, such as vaccination, can legally give consent. This is known as 'Gillick competence'.

If no consent from a parent has been received, but the young person wants to be vaccinated and is judged to be Gillick competent by the healthcare professional, the young person can still be vaccinated. In this case, the school age immunisation service provider will make every effort to contact a parent, to try and reach agreement between the parent and young person. However, the parent cannot overrule the decision of a Gillick competent young person.

The [Green Book of Immunisation](#) contains more information on consent including Gillick competence.

Common questions

Your child has allergies can they have the vaccination?

There are very few children who cannot receive the vaccine.

Prior to vaccination all individuals are issued with a leaflet that outlines safety information about the vaccine. This will include a link to more detailed information about any health conditions that may prevent a young person from receiving vaccination. You can read the [Information for UK recipients](#) for more information.

All young people and their parents or carers should consult their GP or specialist if they have concerns regarding allergies and COVID-19 vaccination.

You have heard vaccines can cause irregular periods or unexpected bleeding

Period problems are extremely common and can be caused by a variety of factors including stress and other short-term illnesses. Although some people have reported that their periods were briefly disrupted in the month after vaccination, there is no evidence that this was due to the vaccine.

Can vaccines affect fertility?

There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility in males or in females. There is some helpful information on the [British Fertility Society website](#).

Do the vaccines contain alcohol?

There is no alcohol in the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines which is the recommended vaccine for young people.

Do the COVID-19 vaccines contain animal products?

The MHRA has confirmed that the vaccines do not contain anything of animal origin. All ingredients are published in healthcare information on the MHRA's website.

Is the vaccine suitable for young people who are vegan or vegetarian friendly, Muslim or Jewish?

The Pfizer vaccine does not contain any meat derivatives, animal products or any egg.

The [British Islamic Medical Association](#) have produced a helpful guide with further information.

Do the vaccines contain COVID-19?

No, the vaccines do not contain any live virus.

Further Information

If you have questions about the vaccine, please speak to the school age immunisation service provider. You will get their contact details with the information and consent form.

If you are feeling overwhelmed or distressed by the decision or COVID-19, [support](#) is available.

[Additional information](#) for parents and children to have conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine for 12 to 15 year olds, including how it works and what to expect after COVID-19 vaccination, is available.