



A letter to all parents or carers of 12 to 15 year old students at Deptford Green School

Dear Parent/Carer,

COVID-19 vaccination – Update and information session

Following the announcement that COVID-19 vaccination is being made available to all 12 to 15 year olds, we would like to invite you to an online information session at **5pm on Thursday 18 November** at: <https://zoom.us/j/92578465750?pwd=dU0veTR1UDJkTU5mUkE5ZXl4WWpmUT09>

Meeting ID: 925 7846 5750

Passcode: 91WYTC

During the session, Lewisham healthcare professionals will share information and answer your questions about COVID-19 vaccination and the consent process.

We will then be hosting an NHS team to deliver COVID-19 vaccination to consented 12 to 15 year olds on **Monday 22 November**.

Vaccinating children and young people 12 years and over to reduce the risk of school absence

As you may have read, everyone aged 12 and over is being offered a COVID-19 vaccination. This follows the Chief Medical Officer's guidance that the risks of vaccination are outweighed by the benefits of reducing potential damage from further school absence and loss of education.

A recent survey suggested one in two children aged 10-15 years feel they have fallen behind in education, with two in three feeling under pressure to catch up. We know many of our children and young people in Lewisham have been impacted by school closures and isolating at home. Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against COVID-19 and so getting your child vaccinated is the best way to keep them safe and not miss school.

Vaccination of children and young people at Deptford Green School

The NHS will run a day-long vaccination clinic at Deptford Green School to tie in with school hours on Monday 22 November. Please note that the NHS team will only be able to give the vaccine to students who are 12 years or older on that day.

Your consent will be sought in the same way as for other vaccines normally delivered at school. We have developed a secure online link that you can use to register consent for the vaccination. The

process is quick and easy to use:

<https://app.schoolscreener.com/Portal/#/Lewisham/imms/li12/100740>

It's really important that you have a conversation with your child about consent for the vaccine. The nurse will discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with your child at their appointment and will be able to answer any questions they may have.

Students aged 16 or 17 will also be able to receive their vaccination on 22 November if they request it, but they will not need parental consent.

As for other vaccines, if your child is going to receive the COVID-19 vaccine that day, please ensure they have a proper breakfast, including a drink, before coming to school.

Finding out more

We understand that you may have concerns or questions about COVID-19 vaccination, either for your child or for yourself. There are a number of ways to find out more:

- *Online information session* – As explained above, a Lewisham healthcare professional is hosting an online information session for parents, carers, students and staff on Thursday 18 November at 5pm. You can join the session at:

<https://zoom.us/j/92578465750?pwd=dU0veTR1UDJkTU5mUkE5ZXh4WWpmUT09>

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- *South-east London Vaccine Facts* – The NHS in South East London has established a website with information at nhsselondonvaccinefacts.com.
- *Lewisham vaccination helpline* - You can also book a free, impartial and confidential conversation with a Lewisham healthcare professional in one of over 200 languages. Book online at <https://modality.simplybook.it/v2/> or by calling 07828 499044.

With kind regards,



Dr Catherine Mbema, Director of Public Health for Lewisham





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October 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian

COVID-19 vaccination to 12–15-year-olds

Following recommendation from the Chief Medical Officers the government has agreed that all 12–15-year-olds should be offered a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. This is to protect them against COVID-19 and the disruption and distress it can cause.

We wanted to provide you with some reassurance that Lewisham council is working closely with schools and Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, the NHS organisation leading the school aged vaccination programme in your area, to ensure that vaccinations are delivered with the least disruption to young people's education as possible.

The immunisation nurses who will visit your child's school are very experienced in delivering routine vaccinations to children and young people, such as the flu vaccine and the HPV vaccine. They work closely with parents and carers on consent and can provide clinical advice and guidance. The COVID-19 vaccination will be no different.

We believe your child should be vaccinated and we are now inviting parents/guardians to register your consent for the above vaccinations. We have developed a secure on-line link that parents/guardians can use to register consent for the vaccination. The process is quick and easy to use.

Please click on this link to access the eConsent:

<https://app.schoolscreener.com/Portal/#/Lewisham/imms/li12/100740>

We aim at all times to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure the best healthcare outcomes for all children and young people in Lewisham.

Yours sincerely,

Zipora Govere
Community Matron CYP School Health
Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust



High quality care for every patient
every day



High quality care for every patient
every day

12 – 15 Years – Vaccine, Frequently Asked Questions

Who will be offered COVID-19 vaccinations?

Most 12–15-year-olds will be offered a **single dose** of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine.

12–15-year-olds in the following groups will be offered **two doses** of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine:

- those with severe neuro-disabilities
- those with immunosuppression*
- those with Down Syndrome
- those with profound and multiple learning disabilities, severe learning disabilities, or on GP the learning disability register
- haematological malignancy
- sickle cell disease
- type 1 diabetes
- congenital heart disease
- other health conditions as described by JCVI.
- 12–17-year-olds who are household contacts of people of any age who are immunosuppressed.

What vaccine are you using and which ingredients are in the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine?

The Pfizer vaccine does **NOT** contain eggs, gluten, nuts, soy, gelatine, latex, or preservatives. All COVID-19 vaccines are **free from metals** such as iron, nickel, cobalt, lithium, and rare earth alloys. The vaccine is suitable for people of all faiths.

Is the Coronavirus vaccine safe?

The vaccines have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Any vaccine that is approved must go through all the safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The MHRA follows international standards of safety. Serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare.

I'm currently ill with COVID-19, can I get the vaccine?

People currently unwell and experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should **not** receive the COVID-19 vaccine until they have **recovered**.

You can have the vaccine **28 days** after you had a positive test for COVID-19 or **28 days** after your symptoms started, so you may need to wait.

Can I catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine as it does not contain the virus, but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment.

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in your normal sense of taste or smell

If you have the symptoms above, stay at home and arrange to have a PCR test.

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine works by making a protein from the virus that is important for creating protection.

The protein works in the same way they do for other vaccines by stimulating the immune system to make antibodies and cells to fight the infection.

Does the vaccine have any side effects?

Yes, it does have some side effects, but they don't usually last long. Some people feel shivery a little tired and achy the day after their vaccine- these are not uncommon. Very rarely people develop myocarditis (inflammation of the heart). Most fully recover but may need treatment in hospital.

My child is autistic and afraid of the vaccine, will it affect their autism?

No. Autistic children aged 12-15 are eligible for both doses of the coronavirus vaccine, and all 12-15 year olds will now start to be invited too. In June, the UK's medicine regulator, the MHRA, announced the Pfizer vaccine is also safe and effective for children aged 12-15.

12-15 year olds will start to be invited to book a vaccine appointment over the next few weeks. If you need support with booking an appointment for an autistic child, you should contact your GP.

It is of course still down to individuals and their families to reach an informed choice as to whether they have the vaccine, this change simply gives every autistic child the choice of doing so.

Will the vaccine protect me?

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. It may take a few weeks for your body to build up some protection from the vaccine. You should get good protection from the first dose, having the second dose should give you longer lasting protection against the virus. 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.

Is protection instant after I've been vaccinated?

Protection from any vaccine takes time to build up. In general, the older you are the longer it takes. It will take at least two weeks in younger people and at least three weeks in older people before you can expect to have a good antibody response. Vaccines offer important protection to reduce risk, but they do not make you invincible. No vaccine offers 100% protection against any disease.

What about a second vaccine?

JCVI will provide further advice regarding details of second doses for this group once more data has been analysed. This is expected in the spring for 12–15-year-olds.

Will the vaccine affect my child's fertility?

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility.

There is no biologically plausible mechanism by which current vaccines would cause any impact on women's fertility. Evidence has not been presented that women who have been vaccinated have gone on to have fertility problems.

Likewise, the theory that immunity to the spike protein could lead to fertility problems is not supported by evidence. Most people who contract COVID-19 will develop antibody to the spike and there is no evidence of fertility problems in people who have already had COVID-19.

More detailed information can be found here:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-womens-health/covid-19-vaccines-and-pregnancy/covid-19-vaccines-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding/>

How old do you have to be to get the vaccine? Where can I get it from?

Anyone aged over 12 year olds are eligible for a coronavirus vaccine. The Government's medical advisers have decided that the benefits of being vaccinated outweigh the risks for many reasons in those aged between 12 and 15 years, including by reducing the risk of any more disruption to children's education, which can impact their attainment, mental health and wellbeing.

Young people aged between 12 and 15 years will be offered the vaccination in school. Anyone aged over 16 years old can access vaccinations via their GP, walk in centres or pharmacies. Further information can be found here:

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/coronavirus-covid-19/covid19-vaccine/vaccination-for-covid-19>

Do I have to pay for my child to have the vaccine?

There is no charge for your child to have the COVID vaccination through their school.

Will the vaccine be needed every year for children?

At the moment this unknown but thought to be unlikely.

What happens if someone doesn't want the vaccine? Or if I don't want my child to be vaccinated?

All parents for eligible children will be sent a link to the consent form. On the form you are able to consent to 'yes' or 'no'. If you consent to your child being vaccinated, they will receive a vaccination on the day. If you do not consent to your child being vaccinated, they will not receive a vaccination. It is important that you complete the consent form so that we know if you do or not consent to your child having the vaccine. If you indicate no and your child comes to have a vaccine, you will be called by a healthcare professional to discuss your thoughts. No child will be vaccinated without prior discussion with their parent.

Will those aged 12-15 years be given a COVID vaccine pass like adults?

It is expected that vaccination status will be available on the medical records of your child. They will also have a copy of the card which will have details of the vaccination they have received. They can use that card for proof of vaccination.

If the child is not vaccinated and is a close contact of a case, do they need to isolate?

Close contacts of COVID cases do not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since the final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS

- they are under 18 years, 6 months old
- they are taking part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

What about other routine childhood vaccinations?

JCVI has stressed the importance of ensuring that other routine immunisations for children and young people are maintained given the benefits they offer.

National immunisation programmes are proven to be highly effective at preventing disease, reducing serious and sometimes life-threatening diseases such as meningitis and measles.