

COVID-19 vaccination for children and young people aged 12 to 17 years

Frequently asked questions

Which vaccine is being administered?

In line with current guidance, young people between the ages of 12 and 17 are being offered **two** doses of the **Pfizer** vaccine, spaced 12 weeks apart (unless your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, then the 2nd dose can be offered after 8 weeks).

How safe is the COVID-19 vaccine for children?

The independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) conducted an extensive review of the safety, quality and effectiveness of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in children aged 12-17 and determined it to be very effective.

What side effects might my child experience?

Most side effects are mild and should only last 1-2 days, including: a sore arm around the injection site, fatigue, headache, other body aches, flu-like symptoms such as chills. If your child has a history of allergic reactions, they will be observed for 15 minutes after having the vaccine (it's very rare to have a serious allergic reaction to the vaccine, and if one does occur it will be within minutes). For a full-list of side effects, please refer to the information leaflets that will be provided on the vaccination day.

When will my child be vaccinated?

GSTT (Guy's & St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust) is planning a programme of return visits to schools commencing the week of 10 January 2022. Schools will communicate with parents, carers and young people directly when dates are confirmed.

What if my child is unable to have the vaccine on the day? Are there any mop-up options?

COVID-19 vaccine appointments can always be made at St. Thomas' Hospital in South East London by emailing CovidVaccineBookings@gstt.nhs.uk or telephoning 02071884040. Alternative options that are local to you will be shared in due course.

Why wasn't my child vaccinated when the team came to the school?

Common reasons why pupils do not receive the vaccination during our visit include: consent was submitted too late and we were not able to pick it up on the day, the child is younger than 12 years old, the child was positive for COVID-19 in the last 12 weeks and/or the child was not eligible for their vaccine per the approved clinical timeline.

My child has tested positive for COVID-19, can they be vaccinated?

In line with current guidance, the interval between a positive COVID-19 test and a COVID-19 vaccination should be 12 weeks.

What about those young people who are 11 or nearly 16?

We are only able to vaccinate children who are 12 years of age or older. There will be provision for those pupils soon to turn 12 years to be vaccinated as part of the programme - we will be reviewing follow up visits accordingly. Otherwise, they should consider booking an alternative appointment at a local centre upon their 12th birthday. We are able to vaccinate 16 and 17 year old students; however, these pupils will be treated as adults.

The online form isn't working, what can I do?

The school shares a letter with parents, within which is a link to our electronic consent form. If you are unable to open the link, hold the 'ctrl' key on your keyboard and click on the link to open. Alternatively, try copying and pasting the link into a browser. If you are still unable to access the link, please email Covid19schools Vaccinationprogramme@gstt.nhs.uk for help.

I've made a mistake on the form, what should I do?

Please submit a new form with the correct details.

I do not consent – do I have to fill in the form?

Only young people with parental consent will be offered a vaccination in schools. If you do not consent, you do not need to submit a form.

We have changed our minds about consent

If you wish to change consent status, please submit a new form and contact us by email on Covid19Schoolsvaccinationprogramme@gstt.nhs.uk with 'consent withdrawn' in the subject line giving details of your child / school in the email message. Please note that we prepare for visits to schools in advance and are unable to process last minute changes automatically.