

22nd September 2021

Vaccinations of 12 – 15 year olds: Seasonal Flu and Covid

Dear Parent/Carer,

Apologies as I know it has not been many days since I last wrote to you but, as I promised then, I wanted to update on the situation around the offering of Covid vaccines to young people as and when we receive information ourselves. Although we still don't yet have a full picture we have been given some updates which I wanted to share as concisely as I can:

- Young people who are aged **12 and over** on the day the vaccine is administered will be eligible. We do not yet know the exact dates we will be hosting the vaccination team so can't determine fully who will be eligible but from this information it would be Year 8 and above with some Year 7 being eligible.
- The intention is that both the Covid vaccine but also the Flu vaccine (already offered to primary aged children and this year being extended to secondary) are offered at the same time. They are two separate vaccines and therefore it **will** be possible to receive one and not the other (ie, a student/family can decide to have the flu and not covid vaccine, or vice versa). The consent form sent to families will be clear about which vaccines you are consenting for your child to receive (or neither if that is the preference).
- Those eligible and consenting to the covid vaccine will receive a *single dose* of the Pfizer vaccine (also called 'Comirnaty'). Currently young people will not receive a second dose a period of weeks later as adults have done. The single initial dose, whilst not affording the same level of overall protection as two doses, has been shown to still offer a high level of protection and effectiveness at breaking transmission chains and is being considered the most sensible approach for young people.
- The Government's aim is for those eligible and willing to receive their vaccines by the end of Term 1. We have not had specific dates confirmed **but dates will be publicised in advance to families**, it is just logistics are still being worked out by healthcare providers.
- The vaccination programme will be organised and administered by Sirona Healthcare who are the School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) provider in the South West. They are the same team who carry out the other routine school age vaccinations already (MMR, HPV etc). They are therefore experienced in vaccinating young people. All vaccines are administered by **trained healthcare professionals**.
- The academy will be sending the consent forms to families as we have access to your information more readily. However the reply will go directly to Sirona. As an Academy we will not have access to who has or hasn't given consent.



HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

- We have been assured that, despite media speculation, Sirona will **not** allow students to self-consent or override parental consent. Where students wish to be vaccinated but parents have withheld consent then Sirona staff will advise the student to attend a community based vaccination centre and to engage in further conversation with their parents. This is so as to avoid any conflict of our role as a school in the vaccination programme. Our role is merely providing the facility for vaccinations to take place for those who wish their child to be vaccinated.
- If a parent gives consent, but the child states they do not wish to be vaccinated, the child's wish will prevail. No student will be vaccinated on site at BMA if they do not want to be. Parents will be informed in these cases and advised to attend a community vaccination centre if the child changes their mind.
- We will try **not** to highlight who has or hasn't consented. This will, naturally, be difficult. Therefore the intention is that whole classes will be taken down as a class and then those who do not consent will merely inform the nurse at the time and no vaccination will take place. Of course if a student is open about not being vaccinated they can remain in their classroom and not go down with the group.

The Government have provided a link to a page for parents/carers which you can [visit here](#)

The Government have produced a fact leaflet for young people directly which they can [access here](#). I will leave it for parents/carers to decide whether to share the leaflet with your children. As a school we are not signposting directly to it.

I hope the community appreciate our attempts to be open and transparent. This is all of the information we have currently. As and when we receive any further information I will of course share it and until that time I thank you for your patience.

Best wishes,

Mr C Shaw
Principal