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Dear Parents and Carers

The offer of COVID-19 vaccination to 12-15 year olds in Hertfordshire

Following a 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. The government will take more advice on whether and when to offer a second dose in future.

The government have produced information for parents and carers which you can read here: [COVID-19 vaccination programme for young people: guidance for parents - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-young-people-guidance-for-parents) (www.gov.uk)

You can also read about this recommendation and the reasons for it here: [Universal vaccination of children and young people aged 12 to 15 years against COVID-19 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19) (www.gov.uk)

We wanted to provide you with some reassurance that the county council is working closely with schools and Hertfordshire Community Trust (HCT), the NHS organisation leading the school aged vaccination programme in our 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.

HCT are making arrangements with your child's school to deliver vaccinations in the next few weeks. **Please do not ask the school clinical questions or questions relating to consent as they cannot answer these. If you have questions or concerns, please use the contact information in the letter shared with you from HCT to contact them directly.**

The following page contains links to further information and reading about the COVID-19 vaccination which you and your child may find useful and might want to discuss together.

Yours sincerely

Jim McManus
Director of Public Health

Jo Fisher
Director of Children's Services

Where do I get accurate information on vaccination?

We understand that some parents and carers may be anxious about this decision and may have some questions.

This guide has been produced specifically for 12-17 year old children and you might want to look at it together: [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/94822/covid-19_vaccination_guide_for_children_and_young_people.pdf)

Here are several other sources of accurate, fact-checked information on vaccinations:

- The NHS Website: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- The British Society for Immunology have published a guide to coronavirus vaccines, updated in August 2021: [A guide to vaccinations for COVID-19 | British Society for Immunology](https://www.bsi.org.uk/immunology)
- Hertfordshire's local NHS information, which includes information in different languages and formats such as videos, as well as information on issues including side-effects: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/what-you-need-know>

What about consent?

Informed consent is required by law before the NHS can vaccinate anyone. Young people are routinely offered vaccines to protect against a wide range of illnesses and the legal position on consent for the COVID-19 vaccine is no different to the position on any other vaccines.

Nobody will be given a vaccine without informed consent, and there are well established legal principles setting out who can give consent and in what circumstances. For a child under 16, this will normally be a parent or guardian. You can read more about consent in the Government's guidance for parents here: [COVID-19 vaccination programme for young people: guidance for parents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-young-people-guidance-for-parents) and the NHS England Frequently Asked Questions available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/08/C1384-Vaccinating-children-and-young-people-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>

Your child's school will not be able to advise on consent and they do not have any control on decisions about consent.