



September 2021

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Dear Principal,

This letter is to inform you about recent updates to the Health Service Executive (HSE) COVID-19 vaccination programme.

The HSE continue to rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme and with over 90% of over 16s fully vaccinated.

For anyone who hasn't had their COVID-19 vaccine yet, walk in HSE clinics are being held across the country for first and second dose COVID-19 vaccines. You can still register online or talk to your GP or local pharmacy about getting your COVID-19 vaccine. Visit hse.ie for more information.

You may wish to add some information on the vaccination programme to your school website, social media accounts or send it by text alert.

COVID-19 vaccines for 12-15 Year Olds

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommends parents and guardians consider vaccinating their 12-15 year old children. To date over 60% of children in this age group have been registered to receive their COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccine is particularly recommended if students:

- have a health condition that puts them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- live with someone who is at higher risk of COVID-19.

Students who are vaccinated will be less likely to miss school and other activities because of being ill with COVID-19.

Information to help people considering vaccinating their children including information about the benefits and risk of vaccination and information about how to get vaccinated is available on www.hse.ie/covid19vaccine.

Getting COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines

Many students have received their COVID-19 vaccine recently; some of these students are in first year and are now being offered HPV and Tdap vaccination to prevent human papillomavirus, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Later in the academic year students will be offered their 2nd dose of HPV vaccine and a dose of MenACWY vaccine.

NIAC advises that other vaccines may be administered with COVID-19 vaccines at the same time or at any interval. This includes HPV, Tdap, MenACWY and the nasal spray flu vaccine which will be offered to all children aged 2 – 17 this Autumn.

Information about the school immunisation programmes is available on the National Immunisation Office (NIO) website at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/schoolprog/>





Consent

Only parent(s) and legal guardian(s) are entitled to provide consent for vaccination for students under 16 years of age.

People aged 16 years and older, should make their own informed decision to consent or refuse consent to vaccination, if they have capacity to do so.

A video covering information about consent is available from the NIO Youtube Channel at <https://youtu.be/GcBEjuHUPtE>

Vaccines for Pregnant Women

NIAC now recommend pregnant women can receive the COVID-19 vaccine at any stage of pregnancy. Most pregnant women who get the COVID-19 virus get mild to moderate symptoms. They give birth as planned and the risk of passing on COVID-19 to their baby is low. However, they are more likely to get very unwell and need treatment in intensive care than a woman who is not pregnant.

It is important for pregnant women to discuss the risks and benefits of getting the vaccine with their Obstetrician, Midwife or Doctor before going for vaccination.

Information is also available on the www.hse.ie/covid19vaccine and www.rcpi.ie website.

Vaccines for people who are immunocompromised

NIAC now recommend a 3rd primary dose of COVID-19 vaccine for a small number of people with specific medical conditions. There are currently no recommendations for additional vaccine doses for any other group.

The HSE will contact people who are due to receive a 3rd primary dose of vaccination using traditional and digital communication.

Should you, your staff or any parents require further information on COVID-19 vaccines we recommend visiting the HSE website www.hse.ie/COVID19Vaccine. Information is also available in over 30 languages, as well as accessible formats such as Irish Sign Language, Braille, EasyRead and large print.

Getting COVID-19 vaccine is our best way to protect ourselves and also protect our communities and we thank you for your support as schools continue to face challenges this school year.

Yours sincerely

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