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September 2024

Primary School Vaccination Programme 2024/2025

Dear Principal,

The HSE greatly appreciates the co-operation of the Principals and staff of primary and special schools in the implementation of the HSE's Schools Immunisation Programme to protect children from serious infectious diseases.

This letter is to inform you of the Health Service Executive (HSE) primary school vaccination programme in 2024/2025.

4 in 1 and MMR vaccines

The routine booster dose of diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), polio and tetanus vaccine and a second dose of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine will continue for pupils in Junior Infants. These vaccines will be given by HSE vaccination teams in primary schools in all parts of the country except Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim where they are given by general practitioners in their surgeries.

The World Health Organization recommend a vaccine uptake of 95% to prevent outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases. Since the emergence of COVID-19 the uptake of the MMR vaccine has dropped. Across the world there has been an increase in cases of measles which is of public health concern.

Due to this, the HSE School Vaccination Teams will endeavor to visit primary and special schools from September – December 2024 to protect children in Junior Infants.

We would be grateful if schools could distribute the HSE vaccine information packs as usual to students. Having completed consent forms available allows the HSE school teams to plan immunisation sessions in advance, which is particularly important this year.

Children cannot receive the vaccines unless a parent or guardian has signed the consent form. To remind parents to return the consent forms you may wish to add some information on the vaccine programme to your school website, twitter account or send it by text alert.

Suggested text for this reminder is... *"The HSE school teams are visiting our school on **insert dates** to offer vaccines to Junior Infant students. Information leaflets and consent forms have been sent home with the pupils. Please look out for this information and return the signed consent form to school as soon as possible. Further information on the vaccines can be found at www.immunisation.ie"*

Flu Vaccine

This year the free nasal flu vaccine (LAIV) is available to all children aged 2-17 years of age. Plans are underway as to how this can be delivered to children in primary school. GP's and community pharmacies have already made contact with some schools to offer to visit to provide the vaccine. HSE vaccination teams will be visiting other primary schools including offering vaccine to all children in primary-age special schools across the country between October and Mid- December. If we do not get a chance to visit your school this season, the vaccine will also be available for children through their local GP or pharmacy.

Children cannot receive the vaccines unless a parent or guardian has signed the consent form. To remind parents to return the consent forms you may wish to add some information on the vaccine programme to your school website, twitter account or send it by text alert.



Suggested text for this reminder is... *"The **HSE school teams / primary care teams (delete as appropriate)** are visiting our school on **insert dates** to offer vaccines to children in the following year groups: **insert year groups**. Information leaflets and consent forms have been sent home with the pupils. Please look out for this information and return the signed consent form to school as soon as possible. Further information on the vaccines can be found at www.hse.ie/flu"*

Should you or any parents require further information please visit our website, you will also find contact details for your local immunisation office on www.immunisation.ie and www.hse.ie/flu

Once again thank you for your support of the schools immunisation programme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lucy Jessop', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Lucy Jessop
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