

1 September 2023

Dear Headteacher/PSHE Coordinator,

**School Age Flu Vaccination Programme & Winter Health Resources**

I am writing to share some important information about this year’s school age flu vaccination programme and introduce a range of resources that the Wolverhampton Public Health Team and Vaccination UK have put together to assist you in maximising uptake of the vaccination in your school as well as educate and support children to understand how to stay well over winter. Please take the time to read this, in conjunction with the [UK Health Security Agency's adolescent vaccination programme briefing for secondary schools.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adolescent-vaccination-programme-in-secondary-schools/adolescent-vaccination-programme-briefing-for-secondary-schools)

Once again pupils will be offered a flu vaccination by the school age immunisation service; Vaccination UK. It is extremely important that all schools engage with Vaccination UK and enable them to run clinics on site during the autumn term, before the height of the flu season starts. A vital part of protecting the whole population from flu is to vaccinate children, who are at risk of becoming unwell and who we also know are ‘super-spreaders’, passing the virus more easily to older people and other vulnerable groups. Research has shown that since the launch of the children’s flu programme in 2013, it has helped to reduce school absences.

**Important information about this year’s flu vaccination programme:**

* All vaccinations clinics must be completed by **15 December 2023**. This includes any second visits to the school and catch up sessions. It is therefore vital that schools work closely with Vaccination UK to ensure as many parents / carers as possible return their consent forms in time for the first clinic.
* All pupils from reception to Year 11 will receive their vaccine in the school setting except those with certain medical conditions.
* Vaccination is delivered via a quick and painless nasal spray. However, for parents / carers who require a porcine-free alternative an injectable vaccination is available, and this can be requested via the consent form.
* Parents / carers will be issued with a link to an electronic consent form, which must be completed no later than 5 days before the clinic. The consent form is available via this link: <https://midlands.schoolvaccination.uk/flu/2023/wolverhampton>
* Paper consent forms and information in alternative formats are available by request. You can contact Vaccination UK to request this by telephone: 01902 200077 or email: wolverhampton@v-uk.co.uk
* The local NHS, Local Authority Public Health and Education Teams encourage all schools to enable Vaccination UK nurses to speak to children whose parent’s / guardians have not consented for the purpose of attempting to gain verbal consent via a telephone call. This contact will be made either by the pupils own mobile telephone if appropriate or facilitated by Vaccination UK who will have telephones available during sessions. Please be assured vaccinations will only ever be given with parental consent or in the case of secondary age pupils, where a pupil is deemed to be Gillick-competent as per NHS guidelines: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/children/>

**Winter Health and Flu Vaccination Resources**

The engagement in NHS vaccination programmes, is recognised by OFSTED as being important and provides an opportunity to discuss vaccinations as part of health education, which has been compulsory in primary and secondary schools since September 2020.

The Wolverhampton Public Health Team in conjunction with Vaccination UK have developed a brand new set of resources to support schools in promoting the uptake of flu vaccination and how to stay healthy over winter to help you to reduce the potential for pupil and staff absences as well as any disruption caused by outbreaks.

We have launched a brand new “[Bug Busters](https://bugbusterkids.co.uk/index.html)” website which provides a wide range of resources including a school age immunisation best practice guide, teaching resources, template promotional materials for school websites and text messages for parents /carers and of course all four of our Flu Fighters adventure story books.

**The School Age Immunisation Best Practice Guide**

* Provides all the information schools need to ensure clinics run smoothly and achieve maximum uptake with minimal disruption.
* Contains important information on timeframes leading up to onsite vaccination and on the consent process.

**Linking Winter Health and Vaccinations with RSHE Health Education Delivery**

* A guide to age appropriate teaching resources available from e-Bug which is a curriculum supplement series (Key Stage 1, 2, 3 and 4) that complies with the new statutory guidance for RSE (Relationships Education, RSE & Health Education, September 2020) which is available from [www.e-bug.eu](http://www.e-bug.eu)

**Template Promotional Materials**

* A template flu vaccination **article** to be included on your school website.
* Template **text message** and **social media communications** for your office staff / flu coordinator to use with parents to promote flu vaccination and to support the return of consent forms.
* **Frequently Asked Questions** which can be shared with parents via your website
* Leaflets about the flu vaccination are available in different community languages by using this link [Flu vaccination for children: leaflets and posters - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-leaflets-and-posters?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=c4e09a82-4a4d-46a3-9ee5-4c024703073e&utm_content=weekly)

**Contacts, Further Information & Drop In Events**

If you have any questions about the flu vaccination programme you can contact Vaccination UK via telephone: 01902 200077 or email: wolverhampton@v-uk.co.uk

If you have any questions about the resources or website you can email flufighters@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Vaccination UK and Wolverhampton Public Health Team will also be offering a short online drop in event for all staff members involved in supporting the school age flu programme to answer any questions and support with any issues you wish to raise. This will take place via Microsoft Teams on **13 September 2023 at 13:00**. If you have not received an invite, please email flufighters@wolverhampton.gov.uk

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in making this year’s flu campaign a success.

Yours sincerely,

*R.Eardley*

**Riva Eardley**

**Principal Public Health Specialist**