

# **Childhood Flu School Immunisation pack 2021/22**

**Helping you prepare for  
seasonal flu vaccinations  
in your school**

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**Dear school,**

### **Immunising all children aged 4 to 16 (Years R-11)**

This year, the flu immunisation programme has been expanded to include all children aged 4 to 16 years old as part of Public Health England's plan to reduce flu-related hospital admissions and relieve pressure on the NHS. During the autumn term, our school immunisation team will visit your school and offer the seasonal flu vaccination to all children in Reception and years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. If any of your children have been accelerated or held back a year and fall outside this date range, they will still be offered the vaccine along with their class peers.

Influenza can be a very unpleasant illness in children, especially those with serious health complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia. Annual flu immunisation not only provides important protection to individual children, it also helps reduce the spread of flu to their friends, families, and the wider community. Furthermore, it protects younger siblings, grandparents and others who are at increased risk of becoming seriously ill from flu. Flu vaccination this autumn 21/22 is even more important now that covid-19 restrictions are being lifted due to a concern that flu viruses will be circulating along with covid-19 viruses

### **Allocating timings and space**

As our school immunisation team will be offering the flu vaccination to around 150,000 children across Berkshire between September and December 2021, we need to work with schools to agree timings for each planned session and ensure there's an appropriate space to administer the vaccine.

We're aware that allocating time and space might be challenging for schools. However, due to the vital need to reduce the incidence and transmission of flu this winter thus reducing pressures on the NHS these sessions must be prioritised as we have no capacity to reschedule before the end of the autumn term 2021.

### **Dealing with local Covid-19 outbreaks**

If your school must close during the winter months due to local Covid-19 outbreaks or lockdowns, we've been advised by NHS England to continue to offer the flu vaccine on the planned date within the planned school venue, if possible. We will, of course work, with you and your site team to ensure a safe and organised delivery.

You can read more information for schools on this Public Health England flu [vaccination](#) programme briefing document.

### **Answering your questions**

If, after reading this information pack, you have any problems or questions, please contact the school immunisation team via the contact details on page 12.

Thank you for your ongoing support with this programme. We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



Charlotte Church (Lead Nurse for Immunisations)

## Before your session: Action list

We are very grateful for your support both before and during your planned flu session. Working together helps ensure that sessions run smoothly.

**Please read and action the following. Thank you.**

We appreciate that not all schools have resources to be able to support the immunisation team fully and may struggle with some of these actions. If this is the case, please contact us to discuss your situation so we can work with what you have and ensure the smooth running of your session.

Appoint a lead member of staff within your school to take overall charge of the childhood flu immunisation session and be responsible for liaising with the immunisation team.	
Email <a href="mailto:schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk">schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk</a> a spreadsheet of the names and dates of birth of all eligible children (Reception up to year 11) at the start of the Autumn term 2021. Please password protect the spreadsheet and send the password in a separate email.	
The immunisation team will email you with a parental e-consent letter, which includes the unique school code and process for completing e-consent. Please email this out to ALL parents and carers of eligible year groups at least two weeks prior to their planned session.	
Where possible, add the flu session date and immunisation team contact details to your school website with a link to our Immunisation website: <a href="https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/immunisations">https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/immunisations</a> It is also good practice to email/ text parents with the planned session date as a reminder a few days before.	
Organise an appropriately sized room for the planned flu vaccinations, taking into consideration the number students in your school and the number of healthcare staff vaccinating on the day. If you'd like to discuss our venue requirements for your session, please email <a href="mailto:schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk">schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk</a> . <b>If possible, please provide a ground floor room as the team will arrive on the day with a lot of heavy equipment. Thank you.</b>	
We need to correctly identify children on the day of vaccination. For children in Reception and year 1 and children with learning difficulties we ask that you provide them with a name sticker on the day to help with this process. The name sticker should include the child's full name and DOB.	
Nominate a staff member, who is familiar with the children, to attend the session, collect students from their class, and ensure the timetable is followed.	
Set up the room on the morning of the flu session with adult tables and two adult chairs per nurse/HCSW.	
Provide water for pupils, if required.	

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## Preparing for your school immunisation session

During the autumn term, we will contact you to let you know the date of your immunisation session.

We will also email you an E-consent letter (with a unique code) to email out to parents/carers asking them to complete an electronic consent form for their child's flu vaccination. Parents/carers must complete a separate form for each eligible child. It is really important that any changes in consent status/ medical history regarding individual children following the consent form being completed are emailed to [schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk) please do not ask parents to complete any additional consent forms, as these become duplicates.

If you haven't already done so, you can register for school access to the Electronic consent system\* via the [Berkshire Child Immunisation Service](#). You'll need to click on 'staff area' at the top of the page then 'register as a new user'. You'll then be sent a validation email to confirm registration and be granted access.

Once you have access to the e-consent system, you'll be able to monitor the return of consent forms and support the immunisation team in chasing non-responders.

### Your Lead Healthcare Professional

You will be allocated a lead healthcare professional (HCP) to plan and run your session. They will liaise with you to arrange:

- Timings on the day
- Staggered breaks (if a large school cohort we would ask that student break and lunchtimes, where possible are staggered to allow us to continue vaccinated to achieve optimal uptake).
- Number of staff attending
- Equipment required
- Any students that need special attention (e.g. anxious, history of fainting)

Speak to your lead HCP if you have any additional requirements. While we're unable to change the date of your session, we might be able to be flexible in the way the vaccines are administered.

If you haven't heard from the immunisation team 7 days prior to your planned session, please feel free to call or email us (see page 12 for our contact details).

**\*Some schools have had difficulty registering due to internal firewalls. Please ask your IT team to ensure this is a trusted website before registering.\***

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## On the day of your session

### Timing

The immunisation team will aim to arrive at your school by **9am, at the latest** to set up the session. This will include cleaning surfaces, preparing tables, sorting out equipment and checking vaccines and emergency medication. If you have a large school/ large cohort it may be possible to organise an earlier start/ later finish. Please discuss this with your lead HCP.

The team will aim to start vaccinating at **9:30am**.

As well as vaccinating children against influenza, the team need to correctly identify them and complete electronic documentation after the vaccination.

### Vaccinating safely

The size of your school and the number of students that need to be vaccinated will determine the time it takes our team to vaccinate all students safely.

The safety of all students is our priority so it's important that, where possible, we are accommodated in an area we can use for the duration of the school day. We understand this isn't easy for every school (especially very small schools) but staying in the same place prevents us having to move all our equipment midway through a session and take up more of your time.

### Help from your staff

If vaccinating within a hall or large room, it would be helpful if each class is accompanied by a member of staff who knows the children and can help with the identification process.

As you know, some very young children and children with additional needs aren't always able to correctly identify themselves. So, if you're able to provide Reception and year 1 students with name stickers, we'd be very grateful.

As well as the staff member accompanying children from class, we'd appreciate also having a member of staff to coordinate the timetabling of the session, so that classes are called and arrive on time, for example.

### Following vaccination

Once vaccinated, all children can return to their class if they're well.

After the session, we will provide electronic record cards to parents. These will provide them with details of the vaccination, as well as information on common side effects.

Any absent children whose parents/carers have returned signed consent forms will be contacted to attend a community catch-up clinic. We will arrange this; you don't need to do anything for these children.

**Flu vaccination for school aged children is not routinely provided by GP surgeries. It is only for children with an underlying medical condition. Please advise parents to contact us (via the details on page 12) if they have any concerns or miss their school session.**

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## How to prepare students for vaccination

Except for Reception year children and those whose parents or carers previously declined the vaccination, most children who we receive consent for will have received the flu vaccine previously and should know what to expect. Very young children and children with special educational needs may need further preparation to ensure they're ready for the vaccination in the autumn term.

### Painless nasal sprays

Some students can be particularly anxious when it comes to receiving vaccinations and seeing healthcare staff wearing uniforms. For most children and young people, they will receive their flu vaccine as a nasal spray. This is a small syringe filled with a small amount of flu medicine that is sprayed up into each nostril. The process is quick and painless, often feeling like a tickle.

### Nasal spray alternative for children with certain medical conditions

For any children who have a medical condition preventing them from having the nasal spray, we will discuss with their parent/carer about them receiving the injectable version. In this instance we will work with you on how best to do this within a school environment.

### Suggestions on how schools, teachers, parents or carers can prepare children for vaccination

There is an **animated video** (produced by an NHS organisation) that provides an overview of flu and the nasal spray. This [nasal flu spray video](#) can be watched on YouTube.

The [Health for Kids](#) website has a variety of **games, activities and information** aimed at children, and a section more focused on adults.

You could incorporate the flu video within **one of your lessons** prior to your school's flu session to help children to be less anxious about what will happen and to encourage good hand hygiene.

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## Viral shedding and concerns raised by schools and parents

Healthcare workers and school staff may be asked questions relating to the safety of the flu nasal spray (LAIV) being given in schools. Here is some information on potential exposure during administration and from recently vaccinated children.

### What is Live Attenuated Influenza Virus (LAIV)?

The nasal influenza vaccine uses a live attenuated (weakened) influenza virus which helps protect against influenza infection in those who receive it. LAIV does not cause clinical influenza in those immunised. It is offered to children because it provides good overall protection against the influenza virus and is expected to provide some cross-protection against mismatched strains.

### Exposure to vaccine virus during administration

Administration of the vaccine is via a nasal applicator which delivers just 0.1ml (around 1/50th of a teaspoon) of fluid into each nostril. There is not a 'mist' of vaccine virus in the air when children are being vaccinated and therefore others in the room should not be at risk of "catching" the vaccine virus. The room or school in which administration of nasal influenza vaccine has taken place does not require any special cleaning afterwards.

### Shedding of (releasing) vaccine virus

Although vaccinated children are known to shed (or release) a virus a few days after vaccination, the shed virus is less able to spread from person to person than the natural infection. The amount of virus shed is normally below the levels needed to pass on infection to others and the virus does not survive for long outside of the body. This contrasts with natural flu infection, which spreads easily during the flu season.

In schools where LAIV is administered, the overall risk of contact with influenza viruses is massively reduced by having many children vaccinated, thus reducing their risk of wild flu infection.

### Special cases

A tiny number of children who are extremely severely immunocompromised (e.g. immediately after a bone marrow transplant) would not be attending school anyway because the risk from all the other infections children pass to each other would be too great.

All children with immune problems should be vaccinated, usually with an injected inactivated vaccine. Similarly, healthy children who have family contacts who are very severely immunocompromised should be given an inactivated influenza vaccine.

As such, it's not necessary for children to be excluded from school during the period when the vaccine is being given.

### For further information visit:

[Vaccine Knowledge Project](#)



## Porcine and the nasal spray – Parental refusal

There are some communities that refuse the nasal spray due to it containing porcine gelatine. Gelatine from pork is a common ingredient in drugs, including the nasal flu vaccine.

### Why does the flu spray contain porcine?

Porcine gelatine is a stabiliser that helps to keep the vaccine safe and effective during storage. It would take years to find and test an alternative stabiliser.

### Is porcine gelatine the same as the gelatine in food?

No. The gelatine used in vaccines is different from that in foods. It is highly processed and broken down into very small fragments.

You can read more about [gelatine in vaccines](#) on the Vaccine Knowledge Project website.

### What is the view of faith communities?

From the Kashrut and Medicines Information Service

"It should be noted that according to Jewish laws, there is no problem with porcine or other animal derived ingredients in non-oral products. This includes vaccines, including those administered via the nose, injections, suppositories, creams and ointments."



"Vaccines containing porcine are not permitted in Islam UNLESS lives are at risk and there are no alternatives. Our view is not that Muslims should automatically refuse such treatment. Health is paramount, anyone concerned about the use of gelatin in vaccines must consult a medical practitioner and make an informed decision."

Statement from the Muslim Council of Britain

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccines-and-porcine-gelatine](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccines-and-porcine-gelatine)

[www.mcb.org.uk/mcb-updates/position-on-flu-vaccines](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcb-updates/position-on-flu-vaccines)

### Guidance on alternatives for parents and carers

The flu nasal spray (Fluenz Tetra) is the most effective vaccine to protect children and the wider community against flu. Research has shown that for a nasal spray provides children with better protection against the circulating flu viruses compared to an inactivated vaccine.

However, to prevent localised outbreaks this winter, an alternative (porcine free) vaccine in the form of an injection will be offered. Parents need to complete an electronic consent form and decline the nasal spray due to the content of porcine. The consent system will then offer them an alternative vaccine, which they can chose to consent or decline.



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## School Aged Immunisation Team – General information

The School Aged Immunisation team are employed by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and commissioned by NHS England to deliver school-based immunisations. As an NHS organisation, we ensure that all our staff are trained and safe to practice. Everyone in the team undertakes annual safeguarding and information governance training as well as in-depth immunisation training.

### Carrying mobile phones

All immunisation staff carry a smart phone to ensure they can always offer safe clinical practice. They use these to access medical information via online websites and applications on their phones. They may also need to contact parents with medical queries and access help in medical emergencies.

### Safeguarding children

All our staff have undergone enhanced adult and child Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking. This is monitored and renewed regularly by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.

### Giving feedback from your vaccination session

We always welcome feedback from schools and ask you to contact us with any relevant feedback following your session. Please email us [SchoolImmunisationTeam@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:SchoolImmunisationTeam@berkshire.nhs.uk). Thank you.

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## Sharing personal and health information

As an immunisation team working for the NHS, we ask for and record personal and health information for children and young people who access our services. This helps us treat them now and in the future. This information might be shared with other organisations to help them provide an individual with the best care possible. However, we only provide appropriate information required to support their care and treatment.

### Why the school immunisation team needs to collect personal information

Immunisation is a cornerstone of public health. It is one of the most successful and cost-effective health protection interventions and high immunisation rates are key to preventing the spread of infectious disease, complications and possible early death among individuals. High immunisation rates are also vital in protecting the population's health through both individual and herd immunity.

As such, the school immunisation team needs to access and securely share non-sensitive patient-identifiable information on eligible children. With this information, we can confirm that we have offered immunisation to all eligible children and we can accurately report statistical data to NHS England on a monthly basis. This data allows NHS England monitor trends and uptake and review the incidence of diseases.

Moreover, your support helps us protect the health of all the children within your school. By providing protection against vaccine preventable diseases, we would expect to see a positive impact on child and staff attendance.

### Your legal right to release personal information

In the interest of public health, as many people as possible need to be vaccinated. Schools, therefore, have the legal right\* to release personal information to us so we can assure that everyone eligible and their parents or carers have been given the information and opportunity to be vaccinated, understand the risks of not being vaccinated, and have had the chance to ask any questions about vaccination.

\*Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), schools can provide non-sensitive student data with or without consent from parents. Article 6 (1) (e) states that "the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law." GDPR also governs how the information is stored, managed and processed. This relates to sensitive information such as ethnicity, whether a child has Special Educational Needs, and pupil premium.

To find out more about how we may use personal information, please see the [Berkshire Healthcare Patient Privacy Notice](#) and [Protecting Your Data Privacy Notice](#).

If you have further queries, please contact Berkshire Healthcare data protection officer on [information.governance@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:information.governance@berkshire.nhs.uk) or 01344 415600.

## How to contact us

### The Berkshire School Aged Immunisation team covers 6 areas within Berkshire:

- Slough
- Bracknell Forest
- Reading
- Wokingham
- West Berkshire
- Royal Borough of Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead



**Call: 0300 365 0077**

(Option 1: Clinic Appointments, Option 2: Nurse Queries, Option 3: School Queries, Option 4: Anything Else).

**Email: [schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:schoolimmunisationteam@berkshire.nhs.uk)**

(during school holidays, emails are checked weekly)

#### Secure patient identifiable information

If you are sending secure information to the team, including class lists and contact details, please password protect your document and email it to our secure generic email address shown above.

**<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/immunisations>**