

A university teaching and research-active Trust
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Dear Parent / Carer,

Changes to national COVID-19 vaccination guidance affecting 12-17-year-olds

Due to changes in national COVID-19 vaccination advice affecting 12-17-year-olds, we are writing to outline how this will impact your child's vaccination session at school.

The UK Health Security Agency has recommended that young people, who are not at serious risk of COVID-19, should wait 12 weeks after having a positive case of COVID-19 before having the vaccination. Previously, the advice was to wait for four weeks.

The update to the guidance has been recommended as a precaution against the very small risk of heart inflammation. Emerging evidence from the UK and other countries suggests the longer waiting period reduces the already low risk.

It has been advised that 12-17-year-olds at higher risk of COVID-19 (with underlying conditions, household contacts of immunosuppressed) can still have the vaccination from around four weeks after a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

What this means for you and your child

Our vaccinators will now ask each young person, with consent for the vaccine, if they have had COVID-19 in the last 12 weeks, which has been confirmed by a positive PCR test.

If the child is unsure about the answer to this question, we will call you, the parent or carer, to check.

If it is confirmed the child has not had a COVID-19 infection in the last 12 weeks, the vaccination can go ahead. The vaccination will not be given if the young person is uncertain and if a parent or carer cannot confirm – this includes if we cannot get hold of a parent or carer by phone.

We appreciate this may be confusing for you and your child. We'd encourage you to plan in advance and speak to your child to confirm when they had COVID-19, if this is the case, before the vaccination session. We'd also encourage parents to keep their phone close-by in case of the need to be contacted on the vaccination day.

Please note, due to the additional questions, vaccinations in school may take our team slightly longer to administer, particularly if they need to frequently ring parents.

Further information

We also want to reassure you that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and will give your child vital protection against the virus.

When announcing the recommendation, the Head of Immunisations at UKHSA, Dr Mary Ramsay, said: “The COVID-19 vaccines are very safe. Based on a highly precautionary approach, we are advising a longer interval between COVID infection and vaccination for those aged under 18. This increase is based on the latest reports from the UK and other countries, which may suggest that leaving a longer interval between infection and vaccination will further reduce the already very small risk of myocarditis in younger age groups.

“Young people and parents should be reassured that myocarditis is extremely rare, at whatever point they take up the vaccine, and this change has been made based on the utmost precaution.”

More information about the change can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-updates-clinical-guidance-on-vaccinations-for-12-to-17-year-olds>

Parents can also find out more about the COVID-19 vaccination on our parent information webpage: <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/latest/covid-19-latest-information/covid-19-12-15-year-old-vaccination-programme-information-for-parents/>

Yours sincerely,



Helen Thompson
Director of FYPC and LD Services
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust