3 September 2024

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 to introduce a range of resources that the Wolverhampton Public Health Team and Vaccination UK have put together to assist you in maximising vaccination uptake in your school, as well as to educate and support children to understand how to stay well over winter. Please take the time to read this, in conjunction with the [flu vaccination programme briefing for primary schools from the UK Health Security Agency.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-in-schools/flu-vaccination-programme-2021-to-2022-briefing-for-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 also 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 **13 December 2024**. This includes any second visits to the school and catch up sessions. It is 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/2024/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](mailto: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 that vaccinations will only ever be given with parental consent.

**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 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.

The “[Bug Busters](https://bugbusterkids.co.uk/index.html)” website provides a wide range of resources including a school age immunisation best practice guide, lesson and assembly plans (including an exciting animation and story book all about winter health), 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.

**KS1 and KS2 Bug Busters assembly presentation and lesson plans**

* The Bug Busters lesson plan and assembly presentation will educate children about common winter infections including flu, norovirus, the common cold and how to stop the spread of infection​ through good respiratory and hand hygiene and vaccination.
* We are asking all primary schools to deliver either the assembly or lessons as soon as possible in the first half of the Autumn Term in order to prepare children for onsite flu vaccination clinics and to minimise the spread of common winter infections.

**Bug Busters Animation & Story Book**

* The animation will educate children on flu, norovirus and the common cold and can be used as a teaching aid during lesson plans and assemblies to engage children in a fun and interesting way. For a preview follow this link: [Bug Buster Kids | Children](https://bugbusterkids.co.uk/children.html)
* Children will learn about the importance of hand hygiene, how infections spread as well as why the flu vaccination is so important.
* There is also a downloadable story book which can be used as part of an educational session or at home.

**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=f23b26ff-8a55-4e05-9507-8d5f3527355a&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](mailto:wolverhampton@v-uk.co.uk)

If you have any questions about the resources or website, you can email [flufighters@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:flufighters@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

Vaccination UK and the Wolverhampton Public Health Team will also be offering a short online information session 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 **Wednesday** **18 September 2024 at 12:30pm**. If you have not received an invite, please email [flufighters@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto: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**