

12 October 2021

Dear parents and carers,

COVID-19 Vaccinations at Weald of Kent

As you are aware the vaccination programme for 12 to 15 year olds in England is being delivered in school by the school age immunisation Service (SAIS) across England.

We have been told the SAIS intend to offer the COVID vaccinations at Weald at the same time as the flu vaccinations, which are due to take place on Monday 29 November at Sevenoaks and Thursday 25 and Friday 26 November at Tonbridge.

The guidance issued to school says:

For those aged 12 to 15 years consent will be sought by the SAIS provider from the parent or person with parental responsibility in the same way as for any other school vaccination programme.

A consent form and information leaflet provided by the SAIS team will be used to seek parental consent. Parents will also be provided with a contact number for the SAIS team in case of any queries. Forms should be returned by the deadline agreed with the team. You may be asked to collect these forms from parents on behalf of the SAIS provider team or it may be done electronically.

The school's role in the delivery of the vaccinations is in providing the space for the SAIS team to deliver the vaccines, as well as sharing information from them with you. We are expecting soon to be sent the consent forms and information leaflets to share with you, but these have not yet come into school.

I am aware that some parents and carers have been emailing the school@wealdgs.org email address to either give or withhold their consent for vaccinations, but we are not able to use this information to inform the SAIS team, they will only use the information from their own consent forms in relation to the vaccination programme. I strongly recommend that where there are disagreements within families in relation to the vaccination programme, you make decisions and agree between yourselves the actions each member of the family will take as the school is unable to intervene.

The guidance provided also gives the following information in relation to the vaccine itself:

The COVID-19 vaccine

The vaccination helps to reduce the chance of COVID-19 infection and provides good protection against serious disease. It may take a few weeks to build up some protection from the first dose.

Headteacher: Mrs E Bone BA (Hons), MA

Tudeley Lane, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2JP

Tel: 01732 373 500

Email: school@wealdgs.org

wealdgs.org

Weald of Kent Grammar School Academy Trust

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Common side effects

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term and not everyone gets them. The very common side effects should only last a day or 2.

Very common side effects in the first day or 2 include:

- *having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection*
- *feeling tired*
- *headache, aches and chills*

Children and young people may also have flu-like symptoms with episodes of shivering and shaking for a day or 2.

We suggest that children should rest and take paracetamol (following the dose advice in the packaging) to help make them feel better.

Very rare serious side effects

Worldwide, there have been a small number of cases of inflammation of the heart called myocarditis or pericarditis, reported very rarely after COVID-19 vaccines. Most of these cases recovered within a few days and felt better following rest and simple treatments.

The cases have been seen mostly in younger males and mainly occurred within a few days of the second dose; myocarditis is extremely rare after the first dose of the vaccine.

Urgent medical advice should be sought if a child has the following symptoms in the 7 days following vaccination:

- *chest pain*
- *shortness of breath*
- *feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart*

We will, of course contact you as soon as we have any additional information including the consent forms and leaflets to enable you to make an informed decision in relation to this programme, but wanted to inform you of the dates as soon as we were able. In the meantime, we have also been asked to share the following letter with you:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LqmaHBmc0w3Mklerv9Izf3mlzJN53dCO/view>

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs E Bone
Headteacher