

Letter for parents and guardians from the Director of Public Health

2nd October 2024

Dear parent / guardian

Re Flu Vaccination Programme: autumn/winter 2024/25

The annual seasonal flu vaccination programme is now in full swing.

The children's flu vaccine helps protect against flu. It's offered to school-aged children (Reception to Year 11) and children with certain long-term health conditions.

You should have received an invitation from the immunisation team to enable your child to get their vaccine during the autumn term. For your child to benefit from the school vaccination programme you will need to complete and return the consent before the cut-off date. Completing and returning the consent form will give your child the opportunity to have their vaccine at school. This means you do not have to spend time making a doctor's appointment or taking your child out of school to have their vaccine.

Why should my child get the flu vaccination?

Flu can be very unpleasant for children and can sometimes cause serious problems, such as pneumonia.

Each winter in the UK, thousands of children who do not have a health condition need hospital care because of flu.

Children can catch and spread flu easily. Vaccinating them also helps protect others who are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu, such as babies, anyone who's pregnant, with underlying health issues and the elderly.

What type of vaccination will my child receive?

Most children are offered the nasal spray flu vaccine – it is quick, painless and needle-free. It is the preferred vaccine for children aged 2 to 17 years. The nasal spray vaccine contains a small amount of porcine gelatine (gelatine from pigs). If your personal beliefs prevent you from accepting this vaccine, a porcine free alternative is available on request. However, this is not available as the nasal spray but as an injection. If you choose the non-porcine flu vaccine, please highlight that on the consent form and inform the school.

If you would like more information on the flu vaccine including the different types of vaccines and side effects, please visit the NHS website: [Children's flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/childrens-flu-vaccine)

Yours Sincerely,



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Dr Matt Pearce

Director of Public Health Reading Borough Council and West Berkshire Council