

15th October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

We know how important it is for you to be able to send your child to school, particularly after they have been so impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, both in terms of their education and socially. We want to thank you for your support over the last eighteen months and to ask for your continued support to make sure your children can stay in face-to-face learning.

Schools have put in place a number of measures to help prevent the spread of Covid-19, including:

- Ensuring staff and children practice good hygiene;
- Making sure spaces are well ventilated;
- Encouraging staff and students to test regularly, minimising risk of spreading Covid-19;
- Encouraging all members of the school community to isolate and book a [PCR test](#) should they develop symptoms of the virus;
- Facilitating the delivery of the 12-15 coronavirus vaccination roll out.

12-15 Covid-19 vaccination programme

All children aged 12-15 years are now being offered the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccination. Vaccines are our best defence against Covid-19. They help protect young people and those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

Getting this vaccine to children in a school setting presents a much greater challenge than other vaccination programmes. The Covid-19 vaccine must be prepared onsite, demanding more time and resources. It requires more registered healthcare professionals, compared with other vaccines where support colleagues can assist.

Our immunisation teams may need to return to the same school setting over multiple days and your child may be offered a different date. By the October half-term break, all children aged 12-15 will have received an offer to get their vaccination. In the next couple of weeks, the NHS will invite parents/carers to book appointments at the mass vaccination centre (Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher) for those children aged 12-15 that missed out on their vaccination in a school setting.

Parent/guardians [can click here to make an appointment](#) if:

- their child was unwell on the day of vaccination at their school
- their child has since turned 12 after the vaccinations took place at their school
- their child is needle phobic and/or has anxieties and they wish to accompany them
- their child is home schooled and/or does not attend a school setting
- they missed the opportunity to consent for their child's vaccination
- they would prefer their child to receive their vaccine at the mass vaccination centre at Sandown Park, Esher

We know that some schools are receiving campaign letters and emails with misinformation about the vaccine programme, and a very small number of settings have been notified about peaceful protests nearby.

Schools and settings have been advised on how best to deal with these campaigns. In the event of a protest or disruptive activity outside a school, or if schools know a protest is planned, they have been advised to alert vaccination teams, the Local Authority and the police to agree the best way to manage the situation.

Frequently asked vaccination questions

As more vaccination locations become available, information will be published on the [Surrey Heartlands website](#) which includes a [set of frequently asked questions](#).

Children do not need to be registered with a GP or have an NHS number to be vaccinated. If your child is receiving their vaccine at school, you will have already consented online. If they attend the mass vaccination centre, consent will be asked for there and then. There is further [national guidance](#) about the Covid-19 vaccination including consent, allergies or medical conditions, age and health requirements.

A Covid-19 vaccination enquiry service is provided by local NHS partners. This is not a booking service and does not have access to medical records. It can help with general queries and is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.

Email: syheartlandsccg.vaccination@nhs.net or Tel: 0300 561 2500

Regular testing and reporting

Up to one in three people who have Covid-19 can spread the virus without knowing. This is because they have no symptoms. We are therefore asking all parents to encourage your secondary school children to test twice a week to avoid them unknowingly spreading the virus.

Your child will be able to collect home test kits from school and bring them home with them each week. Please ask your child if they have received these and help them to take the test and report their results. Testing is free of charge.

The tests will come with guidance in multiple languages on how to take the test. You can also watch this useful video to show you [how to take the test](#) - tests usually take a few minutes to do and you get the results in 30 minutes. Then all you need to do is to report the result to NHS Test and Trace: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

Financial support is available if your child tests positive and you need to self-isolate

If you are unable to work due to your child having, or displaying symptoms of, Covid-19, you may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the [NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#) if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate.

You will be eligible if you live in England and meet all the following criteria:

- you have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, including by the NHS Covid-19 app
- you are employed or self-employed
- you cannot work from home and will lose income as a result
- you are claiming at least one of the following benefits:

1. Universal Credit
2. Working Tax Credits
3. income-related Employment and Support Allowance
4. income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
5. Income Support
6. Pension Credit or Housing Benefit

Surrey County Council has worked with young people, the Advertising Network and a number of London boroughs to create [Everything COVID](#) – a web-based resource for young people, which gives information about the Covid-19 vaccination programme and testing. Please share this with your children.

Thank you for your ongoing support in helping to reduce the spread of Covid-19.



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