

FAQs for Flu 2023 to 2024 in Kent & Medway Schools

Dear School,

Thank you for working with us to provide the National programme of Flu vaccinations to children in Year Reception to Year 11. Please see some of the more frequent questions we are asked regarding the flu vaccination sessions taking place in school. If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

What do parents need to do?

We ask all parents & carers to go to: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms scroll down and click on the blue button labelled "Child vaccination form" to complete the online form to tell us whether they wish their child to have the vaccine or not.

What period is the flu programme offered?

The Immunisation team carries out the flu vaccinations in school from the very end of September to December. However, this may be extended but usually via community clinics

Why is our school not having the vaccination until December?

The school age immunisation service offers the flu vaccination to children in over 650 schools, the team arrange the sessions in schools between September and December to ensure that all children are offered the vaccine. If a child is in a clinical risk group and the session in school is not until later in the year, the child will be able to attend one of our clinics or be vaccinated at their GP.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes, the nasal flu vaccination is safe and effective. Evidence has shown that since the introduction of the vaccination to the childhood programme, there has been a significant reduction in the number of children attending A & E with respiratory related illnesses

Is the flu nasal vaccine a live vaccine?

Yes, the nasal flu spray is live which is the most effective flu vaccine.

Do you offer an alternative to the live vaccine?

Yes, we do. This is an injectable flu vaccine which can be given in school (for secondary aged pupils only) and community clinics. Parents will get the option to choose this vaccine when they consent.

Due to religious reasons / underlining health / allergies / other issues a child is not able to have the nasal flu vaccine – what can I do?

The flu injection can now be offered within the School Health programme – this is offered in school (or clinic) for Secondary aged children or a clinic for Primary aged children. Clinics can be booked here: <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms>

Does the flu vaccine contain gelatine and eggs?

The nasal vaccine does contain gelatine and eggs but the flu injection only contains egg protein. The flu injection can be administered in our community clinics but not in school:

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms>.

We administer the nasal flu spray in both school sessions and in our community catch-up clinics.

What happens if two parents disagree over consenting to a vaccine? (One consents and one declines)

The decline of consent will always override the yes consent, parents will need to discuss between them and come to an agreement.

A pupil is very anxious when it comes to vaccinations/needles what can you do?

Please make the nurses aware of this before the session. A clinic booking may be more suitable for them – the child can be accompanied by their parent/ carer and can be booked into a double slot so they have more time with our nurses.

Can the team vaccinate the teachers / parent / adult while they are at a school / community clinic?

The School Aged Immunisation Service (SAIS) is not able to offer adult vaccinations under their Patient Group Directive (PGD).

What time will you arrive?

SAIS provide a courier service for the delivery of vaccines to all schools. The vaccines will arrive from 08:00hrs onwards and a nominated member of our team will be on site to accept this delivery, closely followed by others in the team to set up

When will we know the numbers of nurses attending so we can arrange to set up in school?

The scheduling process has changed to allow for more flexibility and because of this it is no longer possible to advise in advance on the number of nurses attending.

The number of nurses attending the session depends on the size of your eligible cohort. Leading up to the vaccination date if more nurses become available we will increase the number of staff attending in order to complete the session as efficiently as possible. For example, if your school has a large cohort that has been scheduled two days for our visit, we may be able to complete it in one day if additional staff become available. We hope to be in a space such as the school sports hall, as we need large area to accommodate us, as we vaccinate them all together in the same place.

Can we be notified of a list of students who will receive the vaccination so we can organise timings?

3 working days before the session we will send a list of children our team wish to see. It wouldn't be an accurate list if we send it too early as we continue to proactively seek completion of the consent form right up to the day of the session. The list of children will be sent by email via **Egress** – please ensure that whomever needs the list has set up an Egress account ahead of time so they can receive this list securely. (Our team can help advise on how to do this.)

How many School staff will you require? We would like the help of at least 2 staff on the day in the hall with us please. We prefer not to have lots of pupils waiting before their vaccines on site.

How long will each student take?

It is quite tricky to tell how long a class will take for nasal flu spray but we estimate it would be 2-3 minutes per student per nurse.

What if children miss the immunisation in school?

Flu vaccines can be given by SAIS in Community Catch up clinics and these are booked online through our website. We will send you information on how parents can book a clinic after we have attended your school.

Shedding of vaccine virus

Although vaccinated children do shed vaccine virus for a few days after vaccination, the virus is less able to spread from person-to-person than the natural infection. The amount of virus shed is normally below that needed to spread infection to others and the virus does not survive for long outside of the body. This is in contrast to natural flu infection, which spreads easily during the flu season. In schools where vaccine is being offered therefore, the overall risk of contact with influenza viruses is massively reduced by having most children vaccinated.

Despite this overall low risk of transmission, parents of children with immune problems may be concerned about their child being exposed to recently vaccinated children who may be shedding virus. In the USA, where there has been extensive use of the nasal flu spray for many years, serious illness amongst immunocompromised contacts who are naturally exposed to vaccine virus has never been observed. Expert doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital, who deal with many children with very serious immune problems, do not recommend keeping such children off school purely because of

vaccination. It is important that all children with immune problems, and their siblings and family contacts, should themselves be vaccinated, usually with an injected (inactivated) vaccine.

A tiny number of children who are extremely severely immunocompromised e.g. immediately after a bone marrow transplant, would not be attending school anyway because the risk from all the other infections that children pass to each other at school would be too great.

We hope this helps with your planning, if you have any other questions please do contact us.

School Aged Immunisation Service
Public Health and Prevention Directorate
Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

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Email: <mailto:kchft.cyp-immunisationteam@nhs.net>

[Live chat with us now](#)

Text chat us now: [07401320923](tel:07401320923)

Our lines are open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm, Tuesday 8.30am to 1pm and Saturday 9am to 12.30pm (excluding bank holidays).

Website: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms