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small community **thinking big**

25th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I trust you had a restful and fun time over the summer – though it all feels such a long time ago already!

I'm sure you will aware that some weeks ago the Government announced that all 11 to 15 year olds will be offered a COVID-19 vaccination. The school is working closely with local Public Health England and the NHS immunisation teams who are responsible for delivering this programme in schools over the coming weeks. The 'target' is that 100% of eligible pupils will have received an offer of a vaccine by half-term (and that there is a 75% take-up rate). That's 63,000 pupils in Surrey alone so I'm sure you can appreciate the logistical challenges of getting this done.

Surrey County Council have released the following general information and I will forward you the details from NHS as soon as I receive them.

#### ***How will 12-15 year olds get the vaccine?***

*We know how much disruption to school and home life COVID-19 has had on our young people, and so this Autumn, all children aged 12 - 15 years are being offered the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination.*

*Very few healthy children and young people with COVID-19 infection go on to have severe illness, but **vaccinating secondary school children should help to reduce the need for them to have time off school**, disrupting face to face learning and reduces the risk of the spread of COVID-19 within school settings.*

#### ***How will it be administered?***

*The NHS is now working with organisations that provide school-age immunisation services to make sure all children aged 12 to 15 are offered a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination before the October half-term break.*

***If you are a parent or guardian of children aged 12-15, you will receive letters from their local school-aged immunisation service provider (forwarded from***

**the school), with details of when the vaccination will be offered.** For most children, this will be through a session at their school.

Children do not need to be registered with a GP or have an NHS number to be vaccinated.

### **Do I need to give consent?**

**You will also be asked to provide consent for your child to receive the vaccination, either through an online or a paper form.**

Parents or guardians do not need to contact their local GP or other NHS services, nor make an appointment through the National Booking Service.

### **Which vaccine will it be?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) vaccine is the only vaccine currently authorised for those aged 12-15.

### **How many doses will they receive?**

- At this time, the Chief Medical Officers advise that healthy 12-15 year olds should be offered a first dose only.
- The recommendation is that those aged 12-15 at greater risk of serious COVID-19, or who are household contacts of severely immunosuppressed individuals, will be offered two doses.

### **What about the flu vaccine?**

This year, the school aged flu vaccine has also been extended so that as well as children in primary school and year 7, it will now be offered to those in years 8 to 11.

So, most secondary school aged children will be eligible for both flu and COVID-19 vaccinations this winter, to protect themselves and those around them, and will receive them in school at the same time.

Please note that whether your child receives a vaccination or not is entirely a family decision – though, in some circumstances, the child can make their own decision. Please be assured that school staff will not attempt to influence this decision-making process one way or the other. We will simply provide you and your child with accurate information so that together you can make an ‘informed’ decision.

### **Continuing COVID protective measures in school**

As an important part of our comprehensive protective measures (see updated risk assessment on our website), we continue to LFT test all students with consent twice weekly. If we have a confirmed positive PCR test for a student or member of staff (who is required to isolate), we increase the LFT testing to daily for everyone who has been in close contact. Please note that, even as a ‘close contact’ of a confirmed case, your child is no longer required to isolate and miss school. Only if they have a positive LFT test in school or develop symptoms will they be sent home and you will be requested to get them a PCR test. However, we continue to inform parents of children who have been in close contact with a confirmed case.

In line with Surrey guidance, as we have more than two confirmed cases in school at the same time we have implemented our outbreak management plan (also published on our website). **Please read the separate warn & inform letter sent today.**

Please note, the Government guidance remains clear that all **passengers on school or public transport** should continue to wear a mask.

For your information, all our updated policies are available on our website:

<https://www.carwarden.surrey.sch.uk/policies>

This includes our revised Safeguarding & Child Protection policy and all staff and Trustees have completed updated training using the latest DfE guidance '*Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2021*'. Keeping your child safe remains our highest priority.

Despite the on-going challenges of the pandemic, it has been a really positive and exciting start to the new academic year! We have warmly welcomed lots of new students who have started this term and they are all settling in extremely well. There is a real 'buzz' around the place with lots of smiling faces and laughter. As restrictive measures have eased we are very much enjoying opportunities to spend more time together (although always safely) and further strengthening our strong sense of belonging to the Carwarden Community. We are also excited about planning whole school activities in and out of school – we are booked to go to the Panto together in December ('Oh no you're not!'), have got lots of brilliant trips out to support your child's learning in the wider community and are even thinking about residential opportunities for later in the year!

We look forward to meeting some of you again at our forthcoming 'meet the tutor' evenings and, as ever, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Kind regards,

Tim

T S Stokes  
Headteacher