

## FAQs for Flu 2024 to 2025 in Kent & Medway Schools

Dear School

Thank you for working with us to provide the National flu vaccination programme to children in 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 do not hesitate to contact us.

### **What do parents need to do?**

We ask all parents & carers to go to: <https://family.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 Service carries out the flu vaccinations in school from September to December. However, this may be extended but usually via community clinics.

### **Why is our school not having the vaccination until December?**

The 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.

### **Does the live flu nasal vaccine contain pork gelatine and eggs?**

The nasal vaccine does contain pork gelatine and eggs but the flu injection only contains egg protein. The flu injection can be administered in our community clinics and secondary schools, but not in primary schools. We administer the nasal flu spray in both school sessions and in our community catch-up clinics.

### **Do you offer an alternative to the live flu nasal 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 the alternative injection when they submit their consent form.

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

If there is disagreement over a vaccination, it will not be carried out unless everyone with Parental Responsibility can agree or if there is a 'Specific Issue Order' from the Court in place saying that the vaccination is in the best interests of the child.

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

Please make the nurses aware of this at the start of 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 teachers/parents/adults while they are at a school?**

No, we are not able to offer adult flu vaccinations.

**What time will you arrive?**

We provide a courier service for the delivery of vaccines to schools. The vaccines will arrive from 8am onwards, and a member of our team will be on site to accept this delivery.

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

Whilst we can't confirm exactly the number of staff attending the session, we can advise the expected number of nurses, however this is subject to change. 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.

We kindly ask that you do not schedule times for the students to attend the session.

**Can we be notified of a list of students who will receive the vaccination?**

3 working days before the session we will send a list of children who have consent in place. It would not be an accurate list if we send it too early as we continue to proactively seek completion of the consent form up to the cut-off date. 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 1 member of staff, preferably someone who can confirm the identity of the children, or are familiar with the children.

**How long will the vaccine take to administer?**

The nasal flu spray takes approximately 2-3 minutes per student per nurse.

**What if children miss the immunisation in school?**

Flu vaccines can be given in our community 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.

Information source: [Factsheet \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

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

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

Telephone: [0300 123 5205](tel:03001235205)

Email: [kchft.cyp-immunisationteam@nhs.net](mailto:kchft.cyp-immunisationteam@nhs.net)

[Live chat with us now](#)

Text chat us now: 07700140385

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](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms)