



E: SeasonalFluProgramme@gov.scot

Directors of Education

4 June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Scottish Childhood and School Flu Immunisation Programme 2021/22

We are writing to provide you with information about the childhood seasonal flu immunisation programme 2021/22.

We would like to begin by thanking you for contributing to the success of the childhood immunisation programme 2020/21 by supporting the work of the NHS to offer the flu vaccination to all primary school aged children.

Given the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable in society this year, it is imperative that we do all we can to reduce the risk of our population from contracting seasonal flu. Delivering the childhood flu immunisation programme this winter will help to protect against children contracting flu themselves but also to protect against children transmitting flu to any vulnerable people with whom they come into contact. It is therefore essential that we build on the success from last year's seasonal flu programme to prevent ill health in the population and minimise further impact on the NHS and social care services. A letter from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer with full details for the programme has been issued and can be viewed at: [CMO\(2021\)07 - Adult flu immunisation programme 2021/22 \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

Seasonal flu vaccine uptake rates for the 2020/21 programme indicate that 76% of primary school children received flu vaccination, compared to 71% in the previous year. This is a massive achievement and demonstrates that targets set can be achieved and exceeded. This success, in the now well-established part of the routine childhood immunisation programme, would not have been possible without all of the hard work and commitment from you and your staff.

For the 2021/22 flu season, eligibility for the childhood flu programme will be extended further to include secondary school pupils, teachers, nursery teachers and support staff who have close contact with pupils. The rationale for this expansion is to maintain the resilience of educational services during the Scottish Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to reduce the risk of infection and transmission of the virus. Further details of the delivery of these vaccinations will be confirmed by local Health Boards.

As has been the case in previous years, primary school children will continue to be administered the vaccine at school. This year the programme has been extended to



secondary school pupils who will also be vaccinated in the school setting. We recognise that delivering the childhood seasonal flu programme is challenging and the impact of Covid-19 will pose further challenges, however we can build upon our learning from the 2020/21 flu season.

NHS Boards will continue to work very closely with your school head teachers to minimise any disruption to your schools. They will ensure that all children will have the opportunity to receive the flu vaccine in a timely manner, whilst maintaining good Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) practices and physical distancing. We will also ensure consent packs are distributed in accordance with IP&C practices.

To support the programme in schools, Public Health Scotland will provide a flu education pack for education staff again this year. These age appropriate resources will include:

- A briefing paper explaining 'Flu immunisation for school children in Scotland'.
- Classroom activities and links to Curriculum for Excellence (with suggested learning opportunities).
- An online video called "You and Flu" (that can be shown to all school pupils in advance of flu immunisation sessions).
- Sample flu invitation letter (contained in the consent pack sent home with pupils).
- School flu leaflet (contained in the consent pack sent home with pupils).
- Flu consent form guidance.

As with last year, posters for staff rooms and parent/carer notice boards, a supply of leaflets and a cover letter will be delivered to all primary and secondary schools for the attention of the Head Teacher in accordance with the schedule agreed with child health departments within each NHS Board. The rest of the flu education pack will be available to download from August from Public Health Scotland's website at www.publichealthscotland.scot/flueducationpack. I hope that you find the pack useful.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter to all Head Teachers in your area. In addition, please consider suggesting that a reference to the programme is added to school newsletters/bulletins or via school websites to help heighten awareness. Parents/carers can be directed to www.nhsinform.scot/childflu.

A letter is also being sent again this year to Directors of Public Health and Health & Social Care Partnership Leads as we are mindful that it is especially important for everyone to continue to work together to support the delivery of this essential programme.

Once again, thank you for your help in enabling us to provide this important protection to children and adolescents attending school establishments in Scotland. We value your support and the vital role you play in helping to achieve this year's uptake of the childhood flu vaccine.

Yours faithfully,

**Vaccinations Division
Scottish Government**