

Vaccinations for school-aged children and young people: invitations, reminders and escalation of contact

Invitations

- Involve schools in sending invitations on behalf of providers.
- Make the format of the invitation accessible to parents and secondary school-aged children and young people.
- Ensure that the information, invitation and any subsequent reminders meet the person's communication needs (see [NHS England's Accessible Information Standard](#)). For more guidance on providing information to people and discussing their preferences with them, see [NICE's guidelines on patient experience in adult NHS services](#) and [shared decision making](#).
- Providers should ensure that young people and their parents or carers have reliable information about vaccines that covers risks and benefits to help them to make informed decisions. The information should include who can consent to vaccination (Gillick competence) as well as the information listed in recommendations 1.3.11 and 1.3.12 (as appropriate).
- Trusted sources include [Oxford University's Vaccine Knowledge Project](#), [NHS England](#) and the [World Health Organization](#).
- Offer incentives, such as a ticket for a prize draw, to encourage the return of consent forms.



Reminders

If a completed consent form is not returned, send a reminder.



Escalation of contact

- Phone the child or young person's parents or carers (as appropriate) to ask for verbal consent if they have not responded by the time preparations are being made for vaccination day.
- If contact cannot be made, involve other health and social care providers who may be involved with the family to help gain consent.



Catch-up sessions

- Commissioners should ensure that school-aged immunisation services offer catch-up vaccination sessions to children and young people who are not up to date with their school-aged vaccination schedule.
- If children and young people who are not up to date with their school-aged vaccinations miss the catch-up sessions, alternative provision should be made for them to be offered the vaccinations.
- Where children and young people are not up to date with any vaccinations that are not part of the school-aged programme, signpost parents and carers (as appropriate) to their GP.

Assessing Gillick competence

- Be aware that young people under 16 can give their own consent to vaccination if they are assessed to be Gillick competent.
- Include an assessment for capacity to consent in the absence of parental consent or if there has been parental refusal, in line with guidance on consent in the [Green book chapter 2](#) and from professional bodies such as the [General Medical Council's advice on making decisions](#).
- School-aged immunisation services should ensure that they have a policy in place to support school-aged immunisation teams in assessing Gillick competence. Include guidance on what action to take when a young person's vaccination preference is different from that of their parents or carers.