

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child's school is taking part in the COVID-19 Schools Infection Survey (SIS2) to assess the level of immunity to COVID-19 in school children.

With the emergence of the new variant of concern, Omicron, we need to increase the number of pupils we are testing. This will enable us to provide better data, which in turn can help to keep schools open.

Please enrol your child into this important study to help protect children and staff at school.

How can my child take part?

Complete the following steps on your computer, tablet or smartphone.

- 1** Go to <https://studies.ons.gov.uk/s/HBXWFG/>
- 2** Read the attached information about the study and what it means for your child and your family.
- 3** Complete and submit the online consent form and short questionnaire. Your child will be enrolled in the study when the consent form and questionnaire is completed and submitted.

A thank you for taking part

We are offering a **£5 e-voucher** to all secondary school pupils after each completed test and/or questionnaire, to thank them for taking part. This voucher can be used in high street stores.

Why are we doing this study?

We want to find out how many school pupils have developed antibodies against the virus and how this may change over the course of the year. The information we collect will help inform policies to protect school pupils and staff.

The study is being conducted by the Office for National Statistics, in partnership with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, working with the Department for Education and is funded by the UK Health Security Agency.

What does the study involve?

The study involves antibody testing and completing a questionnaire alongside testing. If you would like your child to take part, we would like you to complete a consent form and a short questionnaire about each of your children that you enrol. Once this is completed, your child will be a participant of the study. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer testing to children in pre-school/nursery years, so if you have multiple children in a selected school, please only register those who are in reception or above.

A team of study workers will visit your child's school twice before Easter, to facilitate collection of an oral fluid (saliva) sample to test for antibodies against the virus.

We will also ask parents to complete a follow-up questionnaire around the time of testing. In this questionnaire we will ask about your child and their health. If you provide their details, we will also contact your child by email or text, to ask them to fill in part of the questionnaire. These questions will ask your child about their general health and wellbeing. There will also be some questions on whether they have had COVID-19, and their opinions of COVID-19 vaccines. This will be key to informing policies to help children and their education following the pandemic.

The study is voluntary, you or your child do not have to take part and you can withdraw from any round of testing without giving a reason.

If you have any questions, please contact the helpline on **0808 196 1270** or email **covid-19@ons.gov.uk**

Thank you for contributing to this important study.

Yours faithfully,



Professor Sir Ian Diamond
National Statistician and
Permanent Secretary
**Office for National
Statistics**



Shamez Ladhani
Consultant Epidemiologist
**UK Health Security
Agency**



Punam Mangtani
Professor of Clinical
Epidemiology Faculty
of Epidemiology and
Population Health
**London School of
Hygiene and Tropical
Medicine**