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Dear Parent

Please find below a message from Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, which we have been asked to share with all our parents and carers.

Dear parents, carers and guardians,

It remains my top priority as Education Secretary to protect education and make sure children are spending as much time as possible in the classroom.

Last month, the UK Chief Medical Officers recommended that the government extends the offer of a single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to all 12-to-15-year-olds. This has been approved as safe and effective for this age group by the UK medicines regulator, the MHRA.

It is estimated that this country's world leading vaccination programme has saved more than 120,000 lives. Vaccinations are building a wall of defence across the country and it is important that as many young people as possible take up the offer so we can continue to keep these defences strong.

Young people aged 12 to 15 can now book an appointment using the [NHS book a vaccination service](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>). Where possible, appointments should be booked outside of school hours to avoid missing school.

Getting the vaccine is one of the best things young people can do to protect themselves and those around them – and I want to encourage you to consider the new option for them to have their jab at a vaccination centre locally, as well as the option to have it in school.

Having the vaccine makes us all less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on and so will be important in ensuring children can do the things they love like seeing their grandparents during the Christmas holiday. Young people who get COVID-19 will miss school, and may spread it to others. That is why we are encouraging you all to support your children to get vaccinated.

The school-based COVID-19 vaccination programme has already vaccinated nearly half a million young people and visited thousands of schools. If your child is 12 or older on the day the vaccinations are taking place in school, they will be able to access a vaccine.

Further information about vaccinations for 12-15-year-olds can be found at the NHS website [here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine-for-children-aged-12-to-15/) (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine-for-children-aged-12-to-15/>).

It is also particularly important that young people take a COVID-19 test and report the result before returning to school after the half-term break, helping make sure we keep the virus out of education.

Together, we'll beat this virus and protect the education of our children.

Nadhim Zahawi

Education Secretary