



To All Headteachers

Children, Young People and Education

County Hall
Sessions House
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

Phone: 03000 414989
Ask for: David Adams
Email:
david.adams@kent.gov.uk
Date: 2nd February 2021

Dear Colleagues

Following an erroneous message being sent to some schools last week stating that teachers were able to access COVID-19 vaccinations, there has been much confusion across the County. Press coverage over the weekend has only served to exacerbate this issue. For this reason AEO's have sent a letter from the NHS to all schools clarifying the position that the majority of school based staff do not fall into the priority 2 category and therefore should not be receiving a vaccination at this time. The only school based staff who will be able to receive the vaccine at this time are those staff in special schools who work directly with children with complex health needs.

Following the letter being circulated, AEO's have received a number of queries seeking further clarification. One key issue raised by a number of Head Teachers upon receipt of the NHS letter, was the tone and terminology used, which intimated that anyone accessing the vaccine was in some way acting inappropriately. I know any colleagues who have registered for the vaccine have done so in good faith in the belief that they had been invited to apply by the Health Service. So please accept my apologies if any offence has been caused.

The other queries were collated and sent to colleagues in Health to provide responses. The questions and answers are appended to this letter.

Term Time Only Back Pay

We have not forgotten we said we would update you on this issue. We are currently finalising the arrangements and will provide full details shortly.

Use of the Winter Fund

As you will be aware, each Local Authority has received funding from DWP through the Winter Fund. 80% of this grant can be used to support children and families. While a considerable share of this allocation is being used to fund Free School Meals for eligible children over the holidays (Christmas and February), guidance also states it can be used to support families in financial distress with other winter costs, such as heating bills. Should you receive any requests for support from any families, in the first instance you can signpost them to The Kent Support and Assistance service (KSAS), information for which can be found here <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/benefits/home-essentials-in-a-crisis>

Lateral Flow Testing in Secondary Schools

I want to highlight the additional information that was recently issued by the DfE in respect of funding for Lateral Flow testing for Secondary Schools. The latest guidance states:

It is important for secondary schools and colleges to log test results, both positive and negative, on your individual school or college account on the NHS Test and Trace Log Results website. We need to know about all results (not just positive) for public health and virus containment reasons. We will also use the test results recorded to calculate funding allocations. Where schools are part of a multi-academy trust, they should report test data at individual academy level rather than at trust level.

Therefore, if you are looking to access the funding available to facilitate the lateral flow testing programme, you need to ensure you have registered with Test and Trace and are submitting all results.

Free School Meals During The February Break

I am pleased to advise you that we have contracted with Wonde to distribute meals vouchers for the February break to families whose children are eligible for free school meals. Their system is quick and simple to use and will allow all state-maintained schools in Kent to order the vouchers for their eligible families with the cost being charged direct to KCC. I am grateful for your help with this. The full details of how this will operate are attached. This also sets out alternative arrangements for schools to use if Wonde is not the right solution for your circumstances.



HT Letter to Sch
Wonde - Wonde ver

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Adams'.

David Adams
Interim Director of Education

Staff Vaccinations Q &A

- Q1. Appointments of school staff which haven't been cancelled – some colleagues have contacted the NHS to discuss cancellation and they were told to still to attend as the vaccine is registered to the individual in question and it will be wasted otherwise. Please clarify once and for all whether any vaccines have been thrown away or at risk of being thrown?
- A1. People who are not in the current priority lists should not attend clinics that were booked through this sharing of the link within education. Some on Sunday did go ahead as it was too late to rearrange alternative people to attend, but we are identifying alternative people from the correct priority groups to fill other slots.
- Q2. How will those who received a first dose obtain their second? What mechanism
- A2. Those who did get a first dose will be given the second dose from the same centre at the 12 week interval. If people had a second dose appointment cancelled automatically, they will need to rebook using the original link. We are double checking on the process for this as the system has been changed slightly following this incident.
- Q3. Other people not in the priority groups - *' but I do also know for a fact that police members who have also used this link, haven't had any appointments cancelled.'*
- A3. People who are not in the current priority lists should not attempt to use this link.
- Q4. School staff are reporting that they are speaking to NHS staff via telephone and being told that the vaccines are being disposed of as people aren't coming forward – seems unlikely but what is the position?
- A4. There is a huge amount of comment, speculation and rumour on this across the country. If individual NHS staff are giving this message it is unfortunate and we will do what we can to stop it. There are not significant issues of waste and the fact remains that the NHS is working hard to vaccinate those most at risk of death and serious illness in a nationally set priority list. Reserve lists should be made up of other people in the current priority lists. People not in the current priority categories should not attempt to get a vaccination ahead of their turn.
- Q5. some staff have not received a cancellation and can't seem to cancel on line...advice on how to do this please?
- A5. The cancellation option does now seem to be working from comments on social media. If people cannot find a way to cancel, they should still not attend. Other people are being invited to fill the slots booked up by education staff.
- Q6. Having send out the letter to staff clarifying the position on the vaccine, one of my TAs has replied asking whether he qualifies for one. He is neither over 70 nor clinically extremely vulnerable. He works 1:1, 5 days a week with a year one child who has an EHC for ASD/ADHD. Social distancing is impossible for this child and my TA does often have to support the pupil with positive handling (We use the Team Teach approach). The EHC has now been rewritten to state that Specialist provision is necessary but, due to COVID, the process of changing his school placement has stalled. Can this Member of staff qualify for the vaccine?
- A6. We are developing further guidance to clarify access for people supporting children with special needs. People should not use the link that was shared but wait for more information.

- Q7. What does this mean for mainstream schools with Specialist Resource Provisions? We have staff who are working with children who have complex health needs across our school carrying out intimate care. Being an SRP we have a part specialist provision designation and would be grateful if you could clarify the implications for vaccinations for those staff involved?
- A7. We are developing further guidance to clarify access for people supporting children with special needs. People should not use the link that was shared but wait for more information.
- Q8. One of our primary schools was informed at during last week by their local clinic, that there may be some spare vaccine and were asked if staff would be interested in taking the slots. Head said yes and on Friday and all staff were vaccinated at the local clinic. Can you clarify if this is common practice?
- A8. No this isn't common practice and should not have happened. We have sent clarifications to all Primary Care run clinics that they should be running reserve lists made up of people in the national priority groups.