



Westminster City Hall
12th Floor, 64 Victoria Street,
London SW1E 6QP

16 December 2021

Dear parents and carers,

RE: COVID-19

Thank you for your support during the pandemic: every hand wash, test, vaccine and face covering worn helps!

As we head into the Christmas break, we wanted to update you on the current position of COVID-19.

Current Picture

On 14 December, Professor Kevin Fenton, London Regional Director of Public Health, said:

“We are seeing exponential growth of Omicron in London and expect it to rapidly become the dominant variant, in place of Delta. There are still a lot of unknowns about the severity of disease that Omicron may cause across different age ranges and we are closely monitoring patterns of hospitalisation so we can better understand it.

“London is particularly vulnerable to waves of infection caused by new variants due to our international connectivity and persisting challenges with vaccination uptake. But this virus will find vulnerabilities in our defences and we must all get fully vaccinated to withstand this oncoming wave.

“The challenge we face as a city is significant but every dose of vaccine given to someone is a brick in that wall of protection. We need all of London to do this and get full vaccine protection as soon as possible – one dose, two doses and get boosted.”

Vaccine

The schools-based COVID-19 vaccine offer for 12 to 15 year olds will recommence in the new term:

- 12 to 15 year olds who still require a first dose can access this by visiting local vaccines sites, please see the [council website](#) for more information.
- All 12 to 15 year olds will be offered their first or second dose in schools or alternatively they can access a vaccine at a community health setting, or book through the [NHS booking system](#).
- Anyone eligible for a vaccine (including staff) can take up the offer during the on-site visit (i.e., first, second or booster).
- The second dose will be administered no sooner than 8 weeks after the first dose, this a change from 12 weeks.



- For young people aged 16 or over, vaccines can be booked on the [NHS national booking system](#). From 20 December, 12- to 15-year-olds will also be able to book using the national booking system.
- Please also check the [council website](#) for pop up clinics and walk-in opportunities.

Who can have which dose?

- All 12 to 17 years olds will be offered a second dose 8 weeks after their first dose.
- Clinically extremely vulnerable children aged 12 and above, and children aged 12 to 15 who either live with someone who is vulnerable will be contacted by the NHS (e.g., GP surgery) to arrange appointments

Get your NHS COVID Pass letter

As of 15 December, the [NHS COVID pass](#) has been rolled out to 12- to 15-year-olds for international travel, allowing proof of their vaccination status. Use this service if you're travelling abroad, or going to an event, and need to get a letter to prove you've had your COVID-19 vaccination.

Travel

We know many families will be planning to travel abroad over the holidays, please ensure you are familiar with, and adhere to, the national guidance - [Travel to England from another country during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK](#). At present, travellers need to self-isolate until their Day 2 PCR test result comes back negative.

Travelling with children

- Children aged 4 and under do not have to take any COVID-19 travel tests.
- Children aged 12 to 17 must take a COVID-19 test in the 2 days before travel to England.
- Children aged 5 to 17 have to follow the testing and quarantine rules for people who qualify as fully vaccinated on arrival in England.
- This means that they have to quarantine on arrival and take a PCR test on or before day 2.

Check the rules in the [GOV.UK guidance](#) for people who qualify as fully vaccinated for travel to England for more details.

You should also [check the rules in the country you are travelling from](#) as they may require children to take a test at the start of your journey to England.

Return to School – secondary schools

All secondary schools have been asked to test their pupils once on-site, using LFD tests, in the first week of term in January.

After this test on return, pupils should continue to test in line with government guidelines (twice a week).

Please ensure your child(ren) continue twice a week rapid lateral flow testing (symptom-free testing), as testing is key for preventing further transmissions.



If your child is unwell

If your child has one or more of the following symptoms, they should self-isolate immediately , **not attend school**, and [get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK](#)

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Raleigh'.

Anna Raleigh

Director of Public Health

