



## ST MARY'S COLLEGE

20<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will be aware that the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced that young people aged 12 to 15 in England will be offered one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, following advice from the four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs). The main purpose of the COVID-19 childhood vaccination programme is to provide protection to the children who receive the vaccine and help to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in the wider population.

Although the announcement has been made, schools and local public health teams have not yet been provided with any further information, but we have been assured that more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccination programme and how it will work, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions, will be included in the guidance for schools from Public Health England to be published shortly. As soon as we have that information, we will, of course, share it with you in full.

We expect guidance to be very clear about the role schools will play. We have been assured that the role of schools will be as it is in other vaccination programmes, i.e. to provide a venue, organise the throughput of pupils, and support the management of consent letters to parents. Schools and school staff will play no role in the administration of vaccinations or the processing of consent, both of which are a matter for health professionals.

We are very aware that there is a wide range of views on vaccines in general and the extension of the COVID-19 vaccination programme to 12- to 15-year-olds. We respect the right of everyone to hold their own views but must stress that schools and school leaders play no role in policy decisions such as these which are taken by our elected officials. As schools are rightly expected to maintain political neutrality, we are unable to enter discussions about the rights and wrongs of the policy itself.

We will write to you again as soon as we are given further information.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs M Stead  
Head of School

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