**Delivery of Halton’s Childhood Flu Programme during COVID-19**

**October 2nd 2020**

You’ll be aware we’re soon approaching a winter where we are likely to face co-circulation of flu and COVID-19 and it is possible to be infected with flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

Protecting against flu is extremely important as COVID-19 is still circulating and people vulnerable to COVID-19 are also at risk of complications from flu.

Children spread flu easily so if we can protect them we will also protect those who are vulnerable to flu such as babies, the elderly and those with chronic conditions.

The Immunisation team is a key part of Halton’s 0-19 Service and supported by other members of the wider service, they are currently delivering the childhood programme across our schools for pupils from Reception, up to and including Year 7 for the first time. We begin our third week of immunising week commencing 5th October 2020

Our Team have made significant adjustments to how they deliver the nasal flu vaccine in schools underpinned by a risk assessment to ensure the safe delivery of the programme. We have agreed the risk assessments with each school and we will be using classrooms or the hall. Our staff are wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and scrubs.

On the day of the vaccination session, once the nurse checks the child’s consent form and makes sure they are well; the vaccine is administered as a simple spray squirted up each nostril.

Our current uptake is below what is expected as PHE require a minimum 75% uptake in **each** year in **each** school. We are now required to report the performance data per school. We have heard anecdotal stories about why some parents may be choosing not to immunise their child that are incorrect; please flag any issues up with our Immunisation team or the School Nurse so they can reassure parents/carers.

To help us to achieve this we need to continue to work in partnership with staff in each school in a number of areas:

1. We need to start each vaccination session as early as possible please, due to the volume of children we need to see.
2. We need school staff please to join us in encouraging parents/carers to bring non-returned consent forms into school prior to the planned immunisation sessions.
3. Please be aware we can’t deliver the vaccination session if the environment is too cold. Our Nurses are wearing scrubs and need to be bare below elbow so they cannot work safely if too cold. We may have to ask for windows or doors to be closed as it gets colder.
4. We have hired a van to deliver the required equipment to each school but our staff members also require a space in school please to put their personal belongings, which they will put inside a plastic bag. (They have tried to manage by leaving cardigans and coats in their own cars however on occasions it has been too cold for them to walk to the school from where they have parked and when it has been raining they have got very wet.
5. NHS England has sent a letter to all parents encouraging uptake of the vaccination. The letter has a barcode on it. Parents have been asked to return the letter, with the bar code on it, to school on the day of the vaccination. If they do bring these into school can schools please give them to vaccination team on the day of the school session.

Please be assured that any child that hasn’t returned a consent form by the day of vaccination will be given another consent pack on the day of the schools initial vaccination session so that we can follow them up.

Positive childhood flu vaccination messages are regularly shared via our Social Media accounts which can be accessed via [www.facebook.com/019service/](http://www.facebook.com/019service/) and Twitter via @halton019

Our Immunisation Team can be contacted on 0151 495 5066, please be aware the team will be out immunising every day so please leave us a message on the answerphone.