



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

**For P6 Parents' Reference**

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on COVID-19 Vaccination Exercise for Students Aged 12 and Above



# For Further Queries

- You may refer to the following links:
  - <https://www.moe.gov.sg/faqs-covid-19-infection>
  - <https://www.vaccine.gov.sg/faq>
  - <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/vaccination>

# 1. Why are students being prioritized for vaccination? When will they be invited for the vaccination?

We are prioritising the vaccination of students as part of on-going national efforts to keep our education institutions and the wider community safe.

If your child is eligible for the vaccination, you will receive the SMS invitation to make vaccination appointments for your child from 1 June 2021. If your child is not able to get vaccinated during the duration of the vaccination exercise, he or she may do so later if he or she is eligible when the vaccination is open to the general public for their age groups.

While vaccination is not mandatory, we encourage students aged 12 years and above who are medically eligible for the vaccination to take the vaccination when they are offered. This is because there is still a risk of community spread at this time, and the vaccination can help to significantly reduce the chances of COVID-19 infection for students and help to prevent severe illness if infected. This will also help to keep schools and the community safe.

### **2. What are the implications (if any) when parents choose not to vaccinate their child?**

While vaccination is not mandatory, we encourage students aged 12 years and above who are medically eligible for the vaccination to take the vaccination when they are offered. This is because there is still a risk of community spread at this time, and the vaccination can help to significantly reduce the chances of COVID-19 infection for students and help to prevent severe illness if infected. This will also help to keep schools and the community safe.

### 3. What are the vaccines available for this exercise?

Based on the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)'s approval of the medical suitability of the vaccines, individuals below the age of 18 will only be offered the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, while individuals aged 18 and above can opt for either vaccine. The Moderna vaccine may be offered to persons under 18 years old when it is approved for use in this age group.

	Moderna	Pfizer-BioNTech
<b>How it works</b>	Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines teach human cells to make “spike proteins”, found on the virus that causes COVID-19. Our bodies learn to recognize that the protein does not belong there and make antibodies against future infection.	
<b>Dosage</b>	2 doses, 6 – 8 weeks apart	2 doses, 6 – 8 weeks apart
<b>Efficacy</b>	94.1%	95%
<b>Authorised for</b>	Individuals of 18 years and above	Individuals of 12 years and above

### 4. Is the vaccine safe for students? What are the possible side effects?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is currently the only COVID-19 vaccine that has been authorised for use in adolescents aged 12 to 18 years in Singapore. The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and the Expert Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination (EC19V) had reviewed the safety and efficacy of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine based on the clinical trials for individuals in this age group.

The safety profile of the Pfizer vaccine in the younger population is consistent with the known safety profile in the adult population. The side effects include injection site pain, fatigue, headache, chills and fever, which generally resolve on their own within a few days.

You can find out more from the HSA Website:

<https://www.hsa.gov.sg/announcements/press-release/hsa-extends-the-use-of-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-to-adolescents-of-ages-12-to-15> (as of 31 May 2021).

### **5. Will the vaccine protect students against new variants of COVID-19?**

There is evidence that the vaccines do confer protection against the variants. Nevertheless, it is an evolving area of study, and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and the Expert Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination (EC19V) are monitoring this closely.

### **6. Why are we vaccinating students when people who were vaccinated are still getting infected by COVID-19?**

The COVID-19 vaccine is effective in preventing symptomatic disease for the vast majority of those vaccinated, but it is still possible for vaccinated individuals to get infected. While the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine are highly effective, they are not 100 percent effective.

This is because there is still a risk of community spread at this time, and the vaccination can help to significantly reduce the chances of COVID-19 infection for students and help to prevent severe illness if infected. This will also help to keep schools and the community safe.

### **7. How would parents know if their child is medically eligible for vaccination?**

Before making appointments for vaccination, you will be prompted to complete an online screening form, which contains medical questions to screen out students who are not suitable for the current COVID-19 vaccines. There will be another round of medical screening conducted at the vaccination site when your child goes for the appointment. You and your child may seek clarifications or further assessment with the medical professionals onsite.

Alternatively, you may consult your child's regular doctor for advice if he or she should receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Your doctor may provide a memo on your child's condition to help the medical team at the vaccination site assess your child's suitability for vaccination. However, the final decision as to whether your child should proceed with vaccination will be made by the medical professionals at the vaccination site.

**8. Is the vaccination open to all students, including foreign students, or is it limited to Singaporean students and students who are Permanent Residents?**

The vaccination is open to all full-time students, including foreign students with a valid Student's Pass issued by ICA.

## 9. Can students choose to take the vaccination after the student vaccination exercise?

While students can choose to be vaccinated later, this is subject to the availability of vaccine supply.

Students who are unable to get vaccinated during the duration of the MOE vaccination exercise may do so later when vaccination is open to the general public for their age bands and if they are medically eligible to do so at that point in time.

### **10. What should students or their parents do if they have yet to receive the SMS for the vaccination? Is there a hotline parents can call for their queries?**

SMSes will be sent progressively to eligible students (if they are aged 18 and above) or their parents (if their child is below 18 years old). Parents of students in the O, N and A levels (or equivalent) cohorts who have yet to receive the SMS by 3 June should contact the school for assistance. Parents of students in other cohorts will progressively receive the SMSes. Schools will also be reaching out to parents of students in mainstream primary and secondary schools separately with additional details on their vaccinations.

In general, students who are in schools and the IHLs should receive their SMSes by the end of the second week of June.

**For requests or queries on the rescheduling of vaccination appointments, parents can call MOH at 1800 333 9999.** For general questions, parents may contact the school directly.

### **11. Can students schedule their vaccination during school hours? Will students be allowed time off from their school to take their vaccines?**

We encourage students to schedule their vaccination slots outside of school hours if possible, to minimise disruption to their learning and school activities.

If students need to be scheduled for vaccination during school curriculum time, schools will provide time-off for them to do so. In addition, if students feel unwell from the side effects of the vaccine, they would be given time off and considered as being on medical leave. To facilitate this, students should provide evidence of their vaccination appointment.

### **12. What happens if students' vaccination appointment clashes with their national examinations (e.g. oral examinations)?**

If your child's upcoming oral national examination schedule clashes with his or her appointment date for the first or second dose of their vaccination, changes to his or her oral examination dates within the oral examination window can be accommodated where possible. Your child may also schedule new vaccination appointment dates.

Special Consideration may be applicable if rescheduling is not possible. Students should provide evidence of the vaccination appointment to facilitate this.

### **13. Can exceptions be made for students who have yet to turn 12 to receive their vaccinations before their birthdays?**

As the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has only been authorised for use in individuals aged 12 and above, students who have yet to turn 12 will not be medically eligible to receive the vaccination. Parents can register their interest for their child to receive the vaccination once their child turns 12.

**14.If a household has a few school-going children, will their appointment dates be the same, or would it depend on their schools? If they are from the same household, can their appointments be on the same date, so that parents need not take leave twice?**

Parents will receive a unique SMS invitation to sign up for each of their child's vaccination appointment. In the case where parents are able to make appointments for their children at the same vaccination centre and for the same day, but at different timings, parents are still expected to keep to the assigned timings.