PROMOTING
COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESS FOR STUDENTS AGED 12+

Communications pack

VOICES FOR VACCINE

Content

Introduction

The Victorian Government has announced that all students aged 12 years and above in Victoria are eligible to book and receive their COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination clinic, a Commonwealth vaccination centre, or through a GP clinic, pharmacy or community health service.

The Victorian Government is encouraging everyone aged 12 and above to book their vaccine appointment. We want to especially encourage those students in their final year to book their vaccination appointment as soon as possible.

To help support the safe conduct of end-of-year exams, the Victorian Government announced a vaccination blitz for final year school students (all Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Units 3 and 4 students, final year Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and International Baccalaureate (IB) students), their teachers and exam supervisors and assessors.

The vaccination blitz for final year school students has been extended until Sunday 19 September, following a very strong and positive response from the community in the first week of the blitz. Please continue to encourage your eligible staff and students to take up this opportunity.

The Premier has recently announced a call to action for Victoria to achieve one million vaccine doses by 19 September. To support this goal, capacity has been significantly scaled up across the state-run system.

To help stakeholders understand and share important information about COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and safety, we have put together this communications toolkit.

This pack provides a range of materials for students aged 12 and above, as well as final year students. The pack includes social media content, a poster, web banners, newsletter copy and FAQs and other informational resources to help students and parents make informed decisions about their vaccination. It also provides handy links to various Commonwealth and State Government information resources about the vaccination program.

I encourage you to share and distribute these materials among your stakeholder communities to help encourage greater vaccine uptake. Thank you for your support and efforts.

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health

Helpful online resources

The below resources will always include the most accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and safety. Reference and use these resources in your communications to school staff about the vaccine.

Resources

Information on the vaccine and booking an appointment

Students and parents can book and/or change a vaccination appointment at a vaccination centre through the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website or contact the Coronavirus hotline by phoning 1800 675 398. To find a vaccination centre and opening times, visit the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

You can get your COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination clinic, a Commonwealth vaccination centre, or through a GP clinic, pharmacy or community health service. You can book your appointment online or by calling the vaccine provider nearest to you.

For information about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au.

Suggested social media content

Here are some sample social media posts and tiles that can be used across your own social channels to help encourage awareness of COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and uptake.

Feel free to edit and personalise these posts to suit your own style. Please tag @DETVic and use #COVIDVaccine so we can like and share.

Copy options

Option 1

All Victorians aged over 12 are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Final year students are encouraged to book their appointments now to support the safe conduct of the examinations. Visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine or covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility to book an appointment.

Option 2

A vaccination blitz will begin on Tuesday 7 September for final year school students, their teachers and exam supervisors and assessors, who will have access to priority timeslots to receive their first #COVIDVaccine and book their second dose via a dedicated hotline.

Option 3

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect our school communities from the spread of COVID-19. Everyone aged over 12 can book their vaccine appointment now. Visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine.

Download social media tiles

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Option 5

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Other downloadable communications products

Web banner

Poster

Download and print these posters for display in settings where students and parents have visibility.

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Suggested newsletter content

School newsletter templates include:

- Vaccine eligibility for students 12 years and above – student letter
- Vaccine eligibility for final year students – student letter
- Vaccine eligibility for final year students – parent letter

Please consider using the draft content below in your organisation's newsletter or preferred communication channel.

You can customise the content as required for your style and audiences.

Message for students aged 12 years and over

Dear students

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, from Monday, 13 September, everyone aged 12 and over is now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Victorians aged 12 and over are eligible to book and receive their COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination centre, Commonwealth vaccination centre, participating GP clinics, pharmacies or community health services.
COVID-19 vaccines are an essential protection against serious illness.

Vaccination is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged, except where your medical practitioner advises you otherwise.

You and your parents/guardians or carers should speak with your GP or pharmacist if you have health questions.

The Victorian Government's aim is to provide an opportunity for all students aged 12 years and over to receive at least one vaccine dose by the end of the school year.

Please discuss your vaccination with your parent/guardian or carer and with your teachers to plan your absence and minimise disruption to your learning if your vaccination appointment is during school hours.

Consent

You can book your own vaccination appointment and you may be able to consent to vaccination yourself if the health professional assesses you to be a mature minor. This means that the health professional assesses that you understand the information relevant to your decision to be vaccinated and the effect of that decision.

Your parent/carer can also complete a consent from for COVID-19 vaccination for you to bring to your appointment, or they can attend with you to provide consent in person.

How to book an appointment

You, your parent/guardian or carer can find a participating Commonwealth vaccination centre, GP, pharmacy or community health service through the Australian Government Eligibility Checker. You can book your appointment online or by calling the vaccine provider nearest to you.

You, your parent/guardian or carer can book or change a vaccination appointment at a state vaccination centre through the Victorian Government's COVID-19 vaccine online booking system.

To find a state vaccination centre and opening times, visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au.

For information on what to bring to a vaccine appointment please visit Checklist: before your COVID-19 vaccination.

More information

For more information about eligibility, visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or use the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker.

Vaccines and Mental Health webinar for students on Tuesday 14 September

The Victorian Department of Health is hosting a live webinar for young people to provide information on COVID-19 vaccines and how to support their mental health. You can join the free webinar on Tuesday 14 September, from 6pm to 7pm. Registration is via this link.

Topics will include:

- vaccine development and safety
- accessing and consenting to a vaccination
- how to book an appointment
- supporting your mental health
- question and answer session with the panel.

This event will be held via Microsoft Teams Live. For access information visit Attend a live event in Teams.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

[Your name] [organisation name]

Message for final year students

Dear students

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, all students aged 12 years and above are now eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

The Victorian Government aims for all final year students (all Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Units 3 and 4 students, final year Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and International Baccalaureate (IB) students) to receive their first dose by the time they sit their end-of-year exams and provide at least one dose for children aged 12 and older by the end of the school year.

Vaccination blitz for final year students

A reminder that final year students (all Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Units 3 and 4 students, final year Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and final year International Baccalaureate (IB) students), their teachers and exam supervisors and assessors have access to priority timeslots to attend their vaccination appointment at a state vaccination centre until Sunday 19 September.

The vaccination blitz for final year school students has been extended until Sunday 19 September, following a very strong and positive response from the community in the first week of the blitz. We courage all final year students to take up this opportunity.

Consent

Students aged 16 years and above can book their own appointment and consent to vaccination themselves if the health professional assesses them to be a mature minor. That is that the health professional assesses that you understand the information relevant to the decision to be vaccinated and the effect of that decision.

How to book an appointment through the vaccination blitz for final year students

Secondary schools have received information on how eligible students can access a priority booking.

To find a vaccination centre and opening times, visit the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

You can also get a COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination centre, a Commonwealth vaccination centre, or through a GP clinic, pharmacy or community health service. You can book your appointment online or by calling the vaccine provider nearest to you.

What to bring

Bring these things, if you have them:

- a face mask
- any emails about your vaccination appointment (on your phone or printed)
- photo identification, if you have one, such as a passport or driver's licence
- a Medicare number or Individual Healthcare Identifier number.

Please refer to Department Health information on what to bring to your vaccine appointment for more information.

More information

For more information about eligibility, visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or use the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker.

For further assistance, contact:

- the Department of Health Coronavirus hotline: 1800 675 398
- the National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have questions.

[Your name] [organisation name]

Template letter for parents of final year students

Dear parents/guardians and carers

As part of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, more Victorian school students are now eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

All students aged 12 and older can now book a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at state vaccination centres or through their participating GP or pharmacy.

A reminder that final year students (all Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Units 3 and 4 students, final year Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and final year International Baccalaureate (IB) students), their teachers and exam supervisors and assessors have access to priority timeslots to attend their vaccination appointment at a state vaccination centre.

The vaccination blitz for final year school students has been extended until Sunday 19 September, following a very strong and positive response from the community in the first week of the blitz. We encourage all final year students to take up this opportunity.

Secondary schools have received information on how eligible students can access a priority booking.

Final year students should book an appointment as soon as possible to support the safe conduct of examinations.

As their parent/guardian, I encourage you to help them to book and if needed, support them to attend their appointment.

General Achievement Test (GAT) and Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Examinations

The following assessments for senior secondary students will be conducted with health and safety controls in place:

- The GAT has been rescheduled and will take place on Tuesday, 5 October 2021
- Final VCE examinations will take place from 4 October – 17 November 2021.

Students completing their final year are particularly asked to book an appointment as soon as possible. As their parent/guardian, I encourage you to help them to book and if needed, support them to attend their appointment.

Final year students are asked to consider getting their first vaccine before the GAT on 5 October. In addition, it's recommended not to get the vaccine on the day of an exam, or the day before an exam - to avoid feeling common but mild side effects such as tiredness, headache, muscle pain, fever and chills and/or joint pain during your exam.

Consent

Students can book their own appointment and consent to vaccination themselves if the health professional assesses them to be a mature minor. That is that the health professional assesses that you understand the information relevant to the decision to be vaccinated and the effect of that decision.

How to book an appointment

Secondary schools have received information on how eligible students can access a priority booking.

To find a vaccination centre and opening times, visit the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

You can also get a COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination centre, a Commonwealth vaccination centre, or through a GP clinic, pharmacy or community health service. You can book your appointment online or by calling the vaccine provider nearest to you.

More information

Translated advice about the vaccines is available on the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

For more information about eligibility, visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or use the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker.

For further assistance, contact:

- the Department of Health Coronavirus hotline: 1800 675 398
- the National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080

Please get in touch with me if you wish to discuss this.

[Your name] [organisation name]

Vaccination centres

Below is a list of the state vaccination centres. To find the nearest vaccination centre to you, visit the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

- Alfred Hospital
- Ararat - East Grampians Health Service
- Austin Hospital (Olivia Newton-John Cancer Centre)
- Bairnsdale City Oval
- Ballan COVID-19 Vaccination Hub
- Ballarat Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre
- Beechworth Vaccination Hub
- Bendigo Health COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic
- Box Hill Town Hall
- Bright Vaccination Hub
- Broadmeadows Town Hall
- Campbellfield Ford Complex Drive-Through Vaccination Clinic
- Castlemaine Health
- Cobram NCN Health
- Corryong Vaccination Hub
- Cranbourne Turf Club
- Deer Park - IPC Health Deer Park
- Frankston Community Vaccination Hub – Bayside Centre
- Geelong - former Ford Factory

- Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital
- Horsham Community Clinic
- Kilmore District Health - Outpatients Building
- Kyabram District Health Service
- Leongatha Community Clinic
- Lilydale Community Clinic
- Mansfield District Hospital - Anderson Hall
- Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)
- Melbourne Showgrounds
- Melton vaccination hub (drive-through)
- Melton vaccination hub (indoors)
- Mildura - Kiarivu Barracks
- Monash Medical Centre
- Mt Beauty Vaccination Hub
- Myrtleford Vaccination Hub
- Northern Hospital Epping
- Omeo Medical Centre
- Orbost Medical Centre
- Pakenham – James Bathe Community and Sports Hub
- Portland District Health

- Ringwood East Community Clinic (Braeside Avenue)
- Rosebud Hospital - Point Nepean Road
- Royal Exhibition Building
- Sale - Gippsland Regional Sports Complex
- Sandown Racecourse
- Sandown Racecourse Drive-Through Vaccination Clinic
- Sandringham Hospital
- Seymour Health
- Shepparton Showgrounds - McIntosh Centre
- South Morang - Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre
- St John of God - Berwick Hospital
- Sunshine Hospital
- Traralgon Racecourse
- Wangaratta Vaccination Hub
- Warragul - The Goods Shed
- Warrnambool - South West Healthcare Vaccination Centre
- Werribee Mercy Hospital
- West Melbourne - CoHealth West Melbourne

- Wodonga Vaccination Hub
- Wonthaggi Town Hall
- Wyndham Drive-Through Vaccination Clinic
- Wyndham Indoor Vaccination Centre - Eagle Stadium
- Yarram Medical Centre

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FAQs

When is the COVID-19 vaccine becoming available to students?

All students 12 years and over are now eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and are encouraged to book as soon as possible.

The Victorian Government's aim is to provide an opportunity for all children aged 12 years and older to receive at least one vaccine dose by the end of the school year.

Students, parents/guardians and carers are encouraged to book their vaccine at a vaccination centre using the online booking system or by calling the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398. You can also get a COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination centre, a Commonwealth vaccination centre, or through a GP clinic, pharmacy or community health service.

Can students aged 12 to 15 consent to their own appointment?

Students aged 12 to 15 can book their own appointment and may be able to consent to vaccination themselves if the health professional assesses them to be a mature minor. This means that the health professional assesses that they understand the information relevant to this decision to be vaccinated and the effect of that decision.

Where a student is not considered to be a mature minor by the health professional, the health professional will seek consent from the student's parent/carer.

Parents/carers can complete a consent form for COVID-19 vaccination for their child to bring to their appointment, or parents/carers can attend with their child to provide consent in person.

When can final year students get vaccinated?

To help support the safe conduct of end-of-year exams, there is a vaccination blitz for final year school students (all VCE Units 3 and 4 students, final year VCAL and IB students), their teachers and for exam supervisors and assessors.

The blitz will begin on 7 September and continue until 19 September. During the blitz, final year students, their teachers and exam supervisors and assessors will have access to priority timeslots to attend their vaccination appointment at a vaccination centre.

Final year students, their teachers and exam supervisors and assessors will also be able to book their first and second doses.

Secondary schools have received information on how eligible students can access a priority booking.

What is the Department of Education and Training's role regarding the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out?

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is strongly encouraging all Victorians aged 12 and older to get vaccinated.

Schools, parents and students are encouraged to refer to coronavirus.vic.gov.au or the Australian Government Department of Health for further information about the vaccine rollout.

What do you need to bring to a vaccination appointment?

Bring these things, if you have them:

- a face mask
- any emails about your vaccination appointment (on your phone or printed)
- photo identification, if you have one, such as a passport or driver's licence
- a Medicare number or Individual Healthcare Identifier number

For information refer to Before you get vaccinated for COVID-19.

How do I find out where to go to get the vaccine?

Information on how to book a COVID-19 vaccine, and where vaccines are being administered, is available at: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/book-your-vaccine-appointment.

You can also get a COVID-19 vaccine at a state vaccination centre, a Commonwealth vaccination centre, or through a GP clinic, pharmacy or community health service.

You can book your appointment online or by calling the vaccine provider nearest to you.

If I want to get vaccinated, when should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

You are encouraged to book your vaccination appointment as soon as possible.

While senior secondary students are encouraged to get their first dose before the GAT on 5 October, it is recommended that students do not schedule their vaccination appointment on the day of the GAT, or any exam or the day before an exam. This is to avoid feeling common side effects such as tiredness, headache, muscle pain, fever and chills and / or joint pain during your exam.

Which vaccine will I be receiving?

Students aged 12 and over will be offered the Pfizer vaccination at their state vaccination centre appointment.

Any secondary student who is 18 or older and who has already received one dose of their AstraZeneca vaccine should continue to proceed with their second dose of AstraZeneca. This is consistent with current health advice.

I can't find any available appointments nearby, what do I do?

Information on how to book a COVID-19 vaccine, and where vaccines are being administered, is available at: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/book-your-vaccine-appointment.

Students and parents may also call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398. Please be patient as there may be wait times for appointments. Final year students can book their first and second doses via a dedicated appointment booking hotline as part of the vaccination blitz until 19 September.

Secondary schools have received information on how eligible students can access a priority booking.

How should parents and teachers help support students for vaccination bookings?

Schools are asked to share information about eligibility and access to students, parents, guardians and carers.

Parents, guardians and teachers are encouraged to help support students and especially final year students to make their vaccination appointment for as soon as possible. Once an appointment has been made and if this is to occur during school hours, they should discuss and plan their expected absence and impact on learning requirements.

Schools should exercise maximum flexibility to enable all eligible students to book and then attend their vaccine appointments.

Students can book their own appointment and consent to vaccination themselves if the health professional assesses them to be a mature minor.

Can I make an appointment to be vaccinated during school hours?

Final year secondary students are asked to make an appointment as soon as possible.

Secondary students aged 12 and above are encouraged to make appointments at times that minimise disruption to their learning where possible.

Prior to their appointment students should discuss absence with teachers and parents/ guardians and carers.

FAQs continued

Is the vaccine mandatory?

No. Vaccination for COVID-19 is voluntary for students aged 12 and above, however it is strongly encouraged. Vaccinations for final years students will assist in giving VCE students more certainty around sitting their end-of-year exams.

Can my school force me to be vaccinated?

No. The vaccines are voluntary for the general community, which includes students and you can choose if you want to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The more students who are vaccinated, the more protected our community and schools will be.

Can I take time off after the vaccine if I'm feeling unwell?

Students should discuss their health if they are feeling unwell with parents/guardian and carers and plan absence from school with their teachers where appropriate.

The Victorian Department of Health advises that like all vaccinations, COVID-19 vaccines can have side effects. For more information on the potential side effects of COVID-19 vaccination, visit the Department of Health website.

Is the vaccine safe? I am concerned about the vaccine and its possible side effects.

Please refer to the Department of Health website for information on vaccine safety and possible side effects.

I have just had my flu vaccine, or am planning to have my flu vaccine, can I still have the COVID-19 vaccine?

It is recommended to leave a period of 7 days between receiving the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccination planning can be discussed with your immunisation provider. For more information please refer to the Department of Health website.

My disability/medical condition affects my ability to physically access the vaccine. Are there other options?

Students should speak to their doctor if they have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and their health.

Information on how to book a COVID-19 vaccine, and where vaccines are being administered, is available at the Department of Health website. You may also call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 to discuss any additional requirements you may have.

The Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) program aims to help more people with disability access health services, including:

- COVID-19 testing
- COVID-19 vaccination
- advice and prevention through linking people to other health supports.

Where can I find more information about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Information about COVID-19 vaccines can be found on the Australian Government Department of Health website and the coronavirus.vic.gov.au website.

You may also refer to Information for education staff receiving a COVID-19 vaccine | Coronavirus Victoria.

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