FAQs

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

All students 16 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 aims for all final year students to be vaccinated by the time they sit their end-of-year exams.

In addition to everyone 16 years and over, young people aged 12-15 years are currently eligible to book if they:

- have an underlying medical condition or disability, including NDIS participants
- are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

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. Students can also get their COVID-19 vaccine at a participating doctor's clinic, pharmacy or community health service through the Australian Government Eligibility Checker.

All people in Australia aged 12 and over are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, with bookings for children aged 12 to 15 open from 13 September 2021 via GPs, Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

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

Students and their parents/guardians 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.

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

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

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

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 eligible students 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 card or Individual Healthcare Identifier number

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

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 16 and over and students aged 12 years and older living with a specified underlying medical condition or disability, including NDIS participants, will be offered the Pfizer vaccination at their state vaccination centre appointment.

If you are aged 18-59 years and you booked your appointment before 26 August 2021 you will be offered Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at vaccination centres. If you have an appointment at a vaccination centre, you do not need to rebook or change your appointment.

From 26 August 2021 if you book an AstraZeneca appointment you will receive the AstraZeneca vaccine.

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: 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.

From Tuesday 7 September and until Friday 19 September, 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 can book their first and second dose appointments via a dedicated booking hotline from 8am on Monday, 6 September. The hotline number is 1800 434 144. Year 12 students will be able to book from 8am Monday 6 September. Other Unit 3 and 4 students can book from 8am Wednesday 8 September.

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.

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. Otherwise, students must have a parent or guardian's consent to be vaccinated.

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.

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.

All students 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.

VOICES FOR VACCINE

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FAQs continued

Is the vaccine mandatory?

No. Vaccination for COVID-19 is voluntary for students, however it is strongly encouraged and will help protect you, your family, and people you spend time with.

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 and their parents/guardians should discuss their health if they are feeling unwell 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.

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.

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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