

South Australian
Commissioner
for Children and
Young People
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COVID-19 Survey: Key Findings

What do young people in South Australia think
about COVID-19 vaccines and restrictions?



Commissioner
for Children &
Young People

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Introduction

The pandemic continues to affect the lives of everyone, regardless of age. It will continue to do so well into the future, especially for younger citizens. Despite this, the voices and rights of children and young people appear to be missing from conversations and decision-making around the pandemic. As COVID-19 vaccines have now become available to all South Australians aged 12 and over, I felt it was an appropriate time to ensure we hear from young people so their ideas and lived experiences could be factored in to decision making.

To do this, I created a survey to capture South Australian young people's thoughts, experiences and concerns during this time. The survey asked their views on COVID-19 vaccines and proposed restrictions, as well as where they currently get their information from. I also asked them to tell me what they need from adults to feel better supported during the pandemic.

A total of 506 young South Australians aged 12 to 18 years participated in the survey, which ran over a seven-day period between Friday 17 September and Thursday 23 September 2021.

Age

Young people aged 14 to 15 years were the highest represented group, making up 44% of total respondents. Those aged 12 to 13 years made up one quarter (26%) of respondents and just under one third (30%) were aged 16 to 18 years.

Age group	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
12–13 years	131	26%
14–15 years	222	44%
16–18 years	153	30%

Of the young people who responded:

- 26% identify as belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community
- 16% come from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 6% are living with a disability
- 6% have carer responsibilities; and
- 1.4% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The overwhelming majority of respondents were secondary school students (92%), while the remaining were primary school (6%), TAFE (2%) or university students (1%). One in 10 respondents also identified as workers.

Gender

A higher proportion of young women compared to young men participated in the survey, making up three quarters of respondents. This gender split is not unique to this survey, but instead reflects young people's participation by gender in previous CCYP surveys.

Region

Most respondents lived across the metropolitan Adelaide area, with a relatively even split between North and Western Adelaide (44%), Central and Southern Adelaide (37%) and Local Government Areas.

A smaller number of respondents (7% of all respondents) reported living outside of Greater Adelaide, including postcodes in the council and district council areas of the Adelaide Hills and Adelaide Plains, Mount Barker and Alexandrina, as well as Port Lincoln and Yorke Peninsula.

Survey distribution

The survey link was shared via CCYP SA's Facebook and Instagram pages and sent via email to teachers at several schools across metropolitan Adelaide. CCYP was planning to share with schools across regional South Australia, however, it was decided to close the survey early on Thursday 23 September. This was because the link was shared to the 'Australian Teachers Rise' group on Telegram messenger by someone who encouraged members of this group to 'use childish language' and pretend to be children to skew results 'so that no more kids are jabbed'.

It was relatively straightforward to work out which responses came from this link as they were sent in a brief timeframe with many using postcodes outside South Australia. Also, most of the ages of those responding from this group were easily identified because they were over 18 years or younger than 10 year and used extremist language. A total of 376 responses were excluded from the analysis as a result.

This tells an important story in itself about how polarising this topic is, particularly when it comes to children. The key findings from the remaining 506 responses received from children and young people aged 12 to 18 years are presented in this short report.

Key Findings

506



children and young people aged 12 to 18 years participated in the survey.

1 in 3



knew 'a little' (27.9%) or 'not much at all' (8.1%) about COVID-19 vaccines.

Who's already vaccinated?

- 16.9% of all survey respondents had already had either 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Older young people were more likely than younger respondents to have already received 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine – 30.1% of 16 to 18 year olds compared to 11.1% of 12 to 15 year olds.
- Young people living in the Central and Southern suburbs of Adelaide were almost twice as likely as those living in the Northern and Western suburbs of Adelaide to report having already had 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (22.2% compared to 12.4%).

Of those who are not yet vaccinated:



- Most are very likely (53.9%) or likely (13.4%) to get vaccinated in the next 12 months.
- A few, 1 in 5 said they were unlikely (6.4%) or very unlikely (14.1%) to get a COVID-19 vaccine in the next 12 months and 1 in 10 (12.2%) were unsure.
- A higher proportion of younger respondents (aged 12 to 15) compared to 16 to 18 year olds were unlikely or very unlikely to get vaccinated.

Very likely	53.9%
Likely	13.4%
Unlikely	6.4%
Very unlikely	14.1%
Unsure	12.2%



Key reasons for being unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine were:

- Being scared of needles.
- Thinking it was unnecessary for young people to get a vaccine because of the low risk of their age group getting COVID-19 compared to older people.
- Adelaide or South Australia 'seems to be doing well at the moment.'
- Belief that the risks of vaccination poses a bigger threat than COVID-19, particularly for kids, including concerns about the short-term and long-term side effects for young people and how quickly the vaccine was developed.
- Feeling forced or having parents who don't want them to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Lack of information and not seeing or hearing about any other children or young people getting the COVID-19 vaccine.



75.6%

(three quarters) of young survey respondents felt that only 'a little' or 'not much at all' of the information they had seen about the COVID-19 pandemic was made for people their age.



47.6%

(almost half) of the young people surveyed said they thought 12-15 year olds should be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine without parental consent.

Overall, they felt that communication is key and ideally parents should provide consent but that 'if you're a kid who is feeling unsafe about COVID-19 then you should also have the right to decide for yourself'.



The questions children and young people want decision-makers to answer in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine include the following:

- "Is the COVID-19 vaccine a safe option? How safe is it? Will I get sick with side effects?"
- "Is it necessary? Is it effective? Can we still get COVID-19 if we get fully vaccinated?"
- "How would we get the vaccines? Will we have to book an appointment like our parents or do we need to do something else?"
- "Is it safe for children under a certain age to have the vaccine, or is it okay for all ages?"
- "Will there be a school vaccine rollout?"



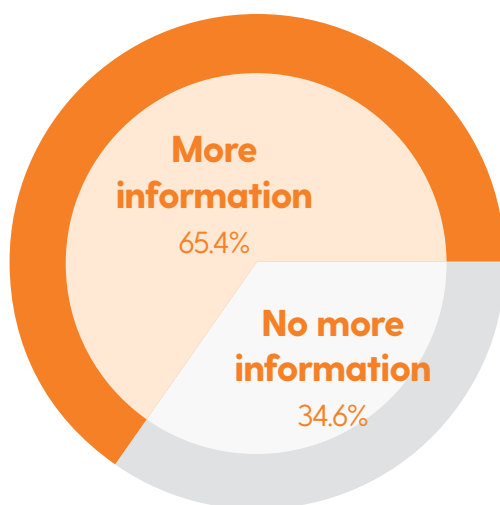
Children and young people want more information about COVID-19 vaccines including:

- “How and why does the vaccine work? What does it actually do to stop the viral infection?”
- “Why is it important for young people to get the vaccine?”
- “What are the risks of getting the vaccine when compared to the risks associated with contracting COVID-19?”
- How does COVID-19 – particularly the Delta strain – affect young people?
- “What symptoms are children and young people likely to experience if they contract the coronavirus?”
- “Why are they pushing everyone to get this vaccine, compared to other vaccines?”
- “How many vaccine doses do you need, including booster shots?”
- “How do vaccines work and how have they made the COVID-19 vaccines so fast?”
- “Why haven’t vaccines been approved for children under 12 years of age yet?”

Young people want access to information about COVID-19 vaccines and the pandemic more broadly in both online and offline spaces and places – where they spend their time. They said this information would be most powerful if it:

- Was clear and tailored to different age groups rather than “treating us all like little kids who don’t know anything.”
- “Came from and was informed by children and young people themselves.”
- “Came from adults they trust, including parents and carers, teachers, SA Health and other experts, celebrities, and influencers.”
- “Was shared in a way that addressed their concerns, but was also fun and engaging.”
- “Was shared in a way that focused on building young people’s understanding of the contagiousness of the virus particularly amongst young men. As one 17-year old from Adelaide Hills told us “they [young men] really think they’re not gonna catch it [COVID]”.”

Two thirds of respondents between the ages of 12 and 18 years (65.4%) said they would like to see more information about COVID-19.



The remaining third (34.6%) said they would not like to see more information about COVID-19. Those who did not want more information about COVID-19 said this was because:

- “They just want to live their lives and ‘be a kid again’.”
- They already have enough or too much information (“it’s all anyone ever talks about”) and it has become repetitive and depressing after more than a year.
- They are worried and sick of it, particularly when “there are other important issues and people dying of other things that are also serious, but which don’t get as much attention”.

Overall, young people want adults to:



- Listen to young people without comparing the experiences of being young today to adults’ own memories or experiences of being young decades ago.
- Check in with young people and reassure them.
- Inform young people ‘without acting like they’re better than us’.
- Include young people in decision-making or communication campaigns.
- Be flexible and avoid placing too much pressure on young people.
- Stop spreading misinformation, follow the restrictions, and ‘show us examples of young people getting vaccinated’.
- Provide better mental health support at school and greater financial support for families who have lost work and are struggling as a result of the impact of the pandemic.

How are young people feeling generally about the way adults are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Young people reported feeling a range of emotions about how adults are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. These ranged from ‘feeling lucky’ about living in a state that has been relatively safe compared to other parts of Australia and the world, through to confusion, frustration, and sadness about the lack of information or appreciation for the unique and often disproportionate ways the pandemic is affecting children and young people’s day to day lives.

Young people reflected on the actions of adult leaders in government and health authorities, as well as on the adults in their lives; parents, carers, and teachers, or other adults they have seen in the media or across social media. While they described some adults as being responsible and calm, others are making young people worried by acting ‘irresponsibly’, ‘stupidly’ or in an ‘entitled’ and ‘selfish’ way.

“ Sometimes people are just working to benefit themselves in this pandemic, and not thinking about how it affects all of us.”
– 15 year old

Many felt as though children and young people are being responsible while adults are becoming increasingly complacent. Specifically, they shared concerns and embarrassment about ‘adults not doing the right thing’, from wearing masks incorrectly and failing to socially distance, to failing to practice basic hygiene (eg on the

school bus), spreading misinformation, and attending protests that are putting people at greater risk.

“ It sucks that adults think it’s ok to put us as kids at risk because they ‘don’t believe in lockdown.’” – 14 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

“ The non-vaccines are selfish. Yeah, they have the right to be scared and not want to and have a voice, but it’s ultimately our future and when borders open, they are going to just ruin the situation. The vaccine is only like 70% effective and we can still get it and if they are carrying it around us, then we’ll still get it despite doing the right thing.” – 13 year old, Female, Norwood, Payneham and St Peters

“ The people surrounding me – teachers, the parents of friends, etc so many are projecting their beliefs and views onto the kids, and are negatively influencing these kids” – 17 year old, Female, North Western Adelaide

There was fear about how much ‘distrust’ and ‘disrespect’ there seems to be in discussions about the pandemic. Particularly about vaccinations, with debates so polarising that it doesn’t feel as though there can be any ‘discussion of grey areas’.

“ It’s between the lack of understanding for some to a full on lockdown freak out for others – never just a regular conversation.”
– 16 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

“ I feel it is quite separate, that we are pitting each other against each other, there is lots of ‘right and wrong’ and less discussion of grey areas.” – 16 year old, Non-binary, Adelaide Hills

Many young people who have worries or reservations about getting vaccinated said their concerns are not being addressed. They explained how difficult it is to voice their concerns, or have any reluctance or hesitation, without being judged or grouped with ‘anti-vaxxers’. This is particularly hard when there isn’t reliable information being made by and for people their age.

Many young people felt overwhelmed and confused by the amount of information available, which they said they felt was changing too quickly. They also said that information is not being tailored to people their age, despite the significant impacts that the government and community responses to the pandemic is having on their social lives, schooling and home life.

“ Responses are very conflicting, which makes it confusing to form an opinion as a young person.” – 17 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

“ I feel the response from adults in terms of the pandemic could be described as unorganised and confusing. Though I understand that no-one has experienced something like this before, it has been confusing for me as a teenager to understand constantly changing guidelines and restrictions.” – 15 year old, Female, Centre Southern LGAs

There was a real sense of frustration and helplessness at the lack of recognition about how COVID-19 affects children and young people too (‘not just adults’). In particular, young people are concerned that they will be among those most impacted by the virus if borders are opened or ‘vaccine passports’ are introduced before they have had a chance to be vaccinated.

“ It seems that adults care more about the things that affect them and less about what affects us (children.) It seems all out of control and I’m getting frustrated about wearing masks in classrooms when there is no proper ventilation in the class itself.”
– 16 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

Many young people also felt fortunate that Adelaide and South Australia have remained relatively safe compared to other parts of the country and world. Indeed, they felt that most South Australians are doing the best they can and that as a community ‘we are heading in the right direction with vaccine rollout’.

At the same time, some young people are frustrated that “many adults here don’t seem to realise just how fortunate we are. Particularly those who are refusing the vaccine when other countries – especially poorer countries – do not have the same access to vaccines, and only wish they could be as lucky as we are in SA.”

Other young people are aware that other places overseas like the UK and the US have already opened up much more, having lifted most restrictions and are already allowing big concerts and festivals. These young people were wondering, 'why can't we,' or 'why haven't we done the same?'

“ There are a lot of people being responsible and I do not want to discredit their hard work against the pandemic. However, viewing the attitudes of my parents and their friends there is a lot of complaining when they are not grateful as to how lucky Adelaide is... There is also the complaints from their friends that they do not know what is in the vaccine. However, they do not know what is in many day to day items.”
– 18 year old, Female, North Western Adelaide

“ I think in South Australia the government is handling keeping covid out well. However, I don't think it's worth destroying business and livelihoods over when more people die from things like car crashes. I'm not saying the lives lost don't matter. Of course they do. But this is going to end up being something we will have to live with.” – 17 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully (North Western LGAs)

Despite feeling grateful in some respects, young people are also sick and tired of missing out on 'everything' they thought they could expect to experience and enjoy as a young person at this time in their lives. They are aware that they are growing up in a completely different world to previous generations, and the pandemic has not only disrupted their stability, relationships, and opportunities in the present, but has also cast significant doubt over their plans for the future.

“I guess it's just really hard because I feel like we are losing what it means to be young, to go out and have fun. I feel like as a Generation we all really care about the community as we have a more humanistic rather than individual outlook – and we want to do all we can to support the Gov. and stop COVID. I know SO many people my age who have already gotten vaccinated or are booked. There's not much I feel like the Gov. can do to support us, and how sad a lot of us feel about our youth right now.”
– 17 year old, Female, Onkaparinga

PART 1

Vaccinations

Likelihood of getting COVID-19 vaccine in the next 12 months

- Young people living in the Central and Southern suburbs of Adelaide were almost twice as likely as those living in the Northern and Western suburbs of Adelaide to report having had 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (22.2% compared to 12.4%).

Who's already vaccinated?

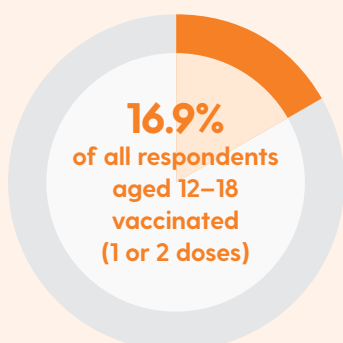
- 16.9% of all respondents already had either 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Older young people were more likely than younger respondents to have already received 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.
 - 30.1% of respondents aged 16–18 years reported having already been vaccinated compared to 11.1% of respondents aged 12–15 years.
 - This is likely to reflect the longer time the vaccine has been available to those aged 16 years and over, as well as their ability to organise and get vaccinated without parental consent.

Of those young people who are not yet vaccinated:

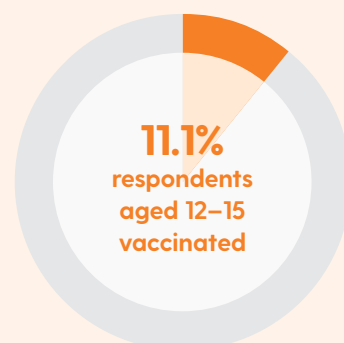
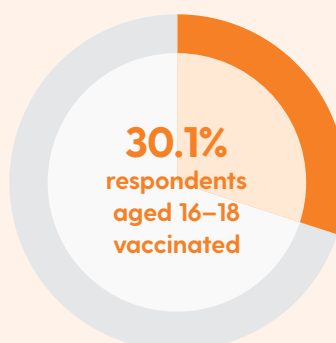
- (13.4%) to get vaccinated in the next 12 months
- 1 in 5 said they were unlikely (6.4%) or very unlikely (14.1%) to get a COVID-19 vaccine in the next 12 months, and 1 in 10 (12.2%) were unsure; and
- a higher proportion of younger respondents (aged 12 to 15 years) compared to those aged 16 to 18 years were unlikely or very unlikely to get vaccinated.

“ I’ve heard it has bad effects, and it doesn’t ensure you don’t get it again or deal with the Delta outbreak.” – 14 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

Already vaccinated



Age breakdown



Key reasons for wanting to get a COVID-19 vaccine were:

- to keep themselves and others in their lives and the community safe (particularly grandparents, other family members, and vulnerable people in the community)
- to feel safer than they currently do
- to go back to normal and for things to 'open up' sooner, including being able to travel to see family or visit their home country; and
- because their parents want them to.

“ I live with my Grandma, who has had lung issues in the past. I fear that if she was to get COVID she wouldn't survive. So, I want to take any precautions necessary.” – 14 year old, Campbelltown

“ Adelaide is in a very good position at the moment. I'm also very busy and there is a very long waiting list, but I do plan on getting it.” – 17 year old, Female, Playford

“ I trust that health professionals know what they're talking about enough to get the vaccine to keep myself, my family, and the community safe. I would also like to think by getting my vaccine (and helping the vaccination rates rise) we will soon get back to a somewhat normal lifestyle.”
– 14 year old, Female, Marion

Key reasons for being unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine were:

- being scared of needles
- thinking it was unnecessary for young people to get vaccinated because of the low risk to their age group of getting COVID-19 compared to older people
- that Adelaide or South Australia seems to be doing well at the moment
- a belief that the risks of vaccination pose a bigger threat than contracting the COVID-19 virus itself. Particularly for kids. This includes concerns about the short-term and long-term side effects for young people, and how quickly the vaccine was developed; and
- feeling forced or having parents who don't want them to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

“ Not enough support for people with needle phobia. Nobody seems to care. Not everyone is an anti vaxer... Stop bragging about needles and putting needle pics everywhere! And provide more support for needle phobics.” – 14 year old, Female, Onkaparinga

“ I don't need one because it is very unlikely that I will get covid and there has been research that vaccines have negative side effects and are unsafe... I think that many adults are panicking and overreacting. In some way, it is actually worse, because if you think about it, most people who died from covid already had a pre-existing condition. Those without that are pretty much safe and don't need to rush to get a vaccine.” – 15 year old, Male, Centre-Southern Adelaide

Who's unsure whether they will get a COVID-19 vaccine?

- 1 in 10 young people surveyed said they did not know how likely they were to get a COVID-19 vaccine in the next 12 months.
- Young people aged 12 to 15 years were more likely than those aged 16 to 18 years to not know how likely they were to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Young people living in northern and western Adelaide suburbs were almost twice as likely as those living in central and southern suburbs to not know how likely they were to get vaccinated.
- Those who were unsure gave several reasons for their response, including that they 'didn't know much about getting it as a kid' or that it's 'up to my parents' and 'my family haven't really talked about it'.
- Some responses mentioned the 'age limit', suggesting there are some young people in South Australia over 12 years of age who are not aware the vaccine is now available to people in their age group.

“ Though I am by no means an anti-vaxxer, with all the different information in regards to vaccination and the mixed messaging, I'm uncomfortable with the idea, as it is so new and widely debated.” – 15 year old, Female

Key concerns about COVID-19 vaccines

Young people of all ages and backgrounds, including those who had already been vaccinated, or who were likely to be vaccinated, shared a range of concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine.

“ I have heard it can do something bad to your heart and they aren't really too sure about the side effects in young people as much as in adults.” – 18 year old, Female, Mitcham

“ I am concerned that I will become sick after getting it, and I can't afford to feel unwell being in year 11.” – 16 year old, Female, Port Adelaide Enfield

Although many young people have some concerns about the side effects, their reservations were not enough to stop them from getting vaccinated. They felt reassured that the 'benefits of getting vaccinated outweighed the risks of catching COVID'. While aware it was 'new' and that side effects varied for different people, young people were pleased that the vaccine was now available to them. They were also aware of the importance of 'stopping the spread' and 'trusted' that the vaccine would not have been made available to them if there was any cause for concern.

“ I just hope that the Government keeps prioritizing giving Pfizer to young Australians especially if we get the Moderna Vaccine in Aus. There is kind of a fear of the unknown. I am scared of perhaps side-effects in the future – but I understand that the benefits outweigh my personal risks.” – 17 year old, Female, Onkaparinga

Others shared more serious concerns, which indicated that they, or other young people they know, are not feeling confident that the vaccine is safe, or even necessary for people their age.

These concerns related to:

- **Short-term side effects, such as:**
 - heart inflammation
 - pain, sore arm, headaches, fever or feeling sick after the vaccination, which might mean missing important days at school, sports training and matches or social events
 - blood clots from Astra Zeneca; and
 - ‘dangerous’ side effects and that it might ‘cause any health issues’ for young people that may differ from how adults are affected.
- **Long-term side effects not yet fully known, particularly for young people, including:**
 - potential for unknown impacts on reproductive health and fertility, which was of particular concern among young female respondents; and
 - whether it can change DNA, heighten the risk of cancer, or impact young brains ‘because we are still developing’.

“ I understand there is risk for fertility issues in the future, however, I would rather the future be COVID free (even though I do want to have children).” – 18 year old, Female, North-Western Adelaide

- **How quickly COVID-19 vaccines were developed and whether they are still in a trial phase or have been tested enough.**
- **Lack of information about what is happening when and how this affects young people, including information about how and where to make an appointment.**
- **Not seeing or hearing about other children and young people being vaccinated.**

- **The prospect of a ‘vaccine passport’ or restrictions that could unfairly impact young people and mean they wouldn’t ‘be able to do anything’ if they’re not vaccinated.**

“ It seems unnecessary for an age group that isn’t severely affected by Covid. We don’t know the long term impact of the vaccine and I have a lot of life left still!” – 15 year old, Male, Playford

“ COVID doesn’t pose a real threat, the vaccines need more study.” – 17 year old, Female, Marion

“ I am scared as I am hesitant to have the vaccine. I feel my family and friends will not accept me if I don’t want it. I feel there is a lot of hate around the issue.” – 16 year old, Female, Onkaparinga

“ How it will impact on my health long term. How will it impact on my reproductive health. Will it alter my DNA? Will I be compensated if I get the vaccine and get sick from it?” – 14 year old, Male, North-Western LGA

Others were not necessarily worried for young people overall, but instead for individuals who may be vulnerable due to their medical history, disability, or cultural background. For others, their only concerns were about whether there was enough supply and appointment availability, and whether enough people are going to get vaccinated overall.

“ Not really young people as a whole demographic – more so individual young people who have specific circumstances eg medical history, disability, minority, etc.” – 16 year old, Female, Port Adelaide Enfield

“ I think that some young people don’t feel the virus will affect them, so they don’t feel the need to get it, although it concerns me as that isn’t the case.” – 16 year old, Non-binary, Adelaide Hills

Information about COVID-19 vaccines

How much do you know about COVID-19 vaccines?	Number responses	% of responses
A lot	61	12.1%
A fair amount	262	51.9%
A little	141	27.9%
Not much at all	41	8.1%

1 in 3 young people knew 'a little' (27.9%) or 'not much at all' (8.1%) about COVID-19 vaccines.

While there were no significant differences by age in the amount of information young people knew about vaccines, there were some differences between age groups when it came to the sources young people were getting their information from.

- While **parents and carers** were the top source of information across all age groups, younger respondents were most likely to get information from parents or carers, with this proportion decreasing as young people get older (from 93% of 12 to 13-year-olds to 81% of 16 to 18 year-olds).
- **TV news** was the second most common source of information across all age groups.
- **News on Facebook** as a source of information became more common among older young people, whereas younger respondents using Facebook were more likely to get information from the **people they know on Facebook (friends and family)** rather than from specific news articles posted to Facebook.

Overall, as young people get older, they are more likely to get information from a variety of sources.

- Older young people are more likely to get information from **SA Health press conferences** (51% of those aged 16 to 18 years and 41% of those aged 14 to 15 years compared to only 25% of those aged 12 to 13 years) or **SA Health or government websites** (64% of those aged 16 to 18 years and 53% of those aged 14 to 15 years, compared to 44% of those aged 12 to 13 years).
- **Teachers or lessons at school** were more likely to be sources of information for younger respondents aged 12 to 15 years, whereas those aged 16 to 18 years were more likely to get information from Instagram and TikTok rather than from teachers or via lessons at school.

Differences by gender

- A similar proportion of young women and young men reported getting information about COVID-19 vaccines from parents and carers, SA Health press conferences, and SA Health or government websites.
- Young men were more likely than young women to get information from Reddit, YouTube and websites other than SA Health or government websites.
- Young women were slightly more likely than young men to get information from celebrities and influencers, and via TikTok and Instagram.

Differences by Age Groups

	12-13 years old	14-15 years old	16-18 years old
1	Parents or Carers (93.1%)	Parents or Carers (89.6%)	Parents or Carers (81.1%)
2	News on TV (80.9%)	News on TV (73.2%)	News on TV (77.1%)
3	Friends (51.2%)	SA Health or Government websites (53.2%)	SA Health or Government websites (63.4%)
4	Governments or Politicians (51.2%)	Governments or Politicians (50.0%)	Friends (53.6%)
5	SA Health or Government websites (44.3%)	Friends (49.1%)	Governments or Politicians (53.6%)
6	Teachers or lessons at school (38.2%)	Teachers or lessons at school (43.6%)	SA Health Press Conferences (50.9%)
7	TikTok (29.0%)	SA Health Press Conferences (40.5%)	Instagram (42.5%)
8	Instagram (26.7%)	Instagram (31.8%)	TikTok (32.1%)
9	SA Health Press Conferences (25.2%)	TikTok (27.3%)	Teachers or lessons at school (25.5%)
10	YouTube (19.1%)	Governments Overseas (18.6%)	News on Facebook (25.5%)
11	Other websites (14.5%)	YouTube (15.9%)	YouTube (22.2%)
12	Governments Overseas (13.7%)	Celebrities and Influencers (17.3%)	Other websites (19.6%)
13	Celebrities and Influencers (9.9%)	Other websites (15.9%)	Celebrities and Influencers (18.3%)
14	Facebook posts by Friends/Family (7.6%)	News on Facebook (15.0%)	Governments Overseas (14.4%)
15	News on Facebook (6.8%)	Facebook posts by Friends/Family (11.4%)	Facebook posts by Friends/Family (12.4%)
16	Reddit (3%)	Reddit (3.6%)	Reddit (5.9%)

Other sources include:

Friends/Family overseas; doctors, health professionals, or parents who are doctors; Radio; Snapchat, Twitter and “social media in general”; protests or “Anti-vaccine rallies I’ve witnessed”; websites “you try to bury in your algorithm”; Australian Centre for Disease Control (ACDC) and US CDC, US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Australia’s Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

What would help young people better understand COVID-19 vaccines?

“ Listen to them, provide assertive solutions, inform them more, and not just wait until they ask about it. Tell them the truth backed up by facts and statistics.” – 15 year old, Female, Glenelg

“ Maybe telling us more about it so we know what we are getting ourselves into. Like say an outcome from this vaccine could be that in the later future we can't have children (not saying that [this] is an outcome, but we don't know yet as it's very early).” – 13 year old, Female, Mitcham

Young people want adults to listen to them, to take their concerns seriously, and to provide information using language they understand. Although some young people noted that SA Health were doing a good job of challenging misinformation, they were concerned that the news and SA Health press conferences and websites ‘use big words that most young children won't understand’. Others said they trusted SA Health, but that they wouldn't necessarily follow them on social media and that youth-friendly content sponsored on Instagram could be an important way for young people to be kept informed.

“ Maybe sponsored content from SA health on Instagram as I wouldn't go out of my way to follow them, yet I'd still like to see the information.” – 18 year old, Female, Central-Southern Adelaide

Young people want a ‘full run down’ on the different types of COVID-19 vaccines available to them, including information about:

- how the vaccine works and ‘what it actually does’
- why the vaccine works
- whether it's important for people their age to get it and why; and
- what the risks and benefits of the vaccine are for people of all ages, compared to the risks of COVID-19, but particularly for younger people.

“ More information spread about it explaining the different vaccines because some people I know have no more information than the names of the vaccines.” – 16 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

“ More awareness about what it does, and statistics to help convince people that it actually works.” – 14 year old, Female, North Western Adelaide

“ I feel that many young people may be concerned about the potential side effects of the vaccine or just are generally afraid. So I believe it is important to strongly underline the benefits over the disadvantages... More publicity so that their parents hear and inform them. More info through schools and teachers.” – 13 year old, Female, Mitcham

“ The Pfizer Vaccination and its MRNA process is definitely something that hasn't been covered very well – and can sound very foreign and scary... I think, since I am in year 12, the information we got in the yr. 11 Bio was very helpful in understanding how vaccines and viruses work – perhaps explaining this in a succinct and engaging way would let younger people understand vaccinations better.” – 17 year old, Female, Onkaparinga

Young people want this information to be in places – both online and offline – where they spend their time, including:

- At school and TAFE, either in lessons, via dedicated sessions ‘run by people who know what they’re talking about’ and the health curriculum or through posters on toilet doors and around school grounds, as well as through Daymap or other school websites.
- News media, including Behind the News (BTN) or dedicated press conferences speaking directly to children and young people in child friendly and youth friendly language.
- Engaging websites and trusted social media account posts and videos made by and for young people and shared in places and on platforms they trust and will actually see.
- Posters on public transport stops and stations as well as trains, buses and trams.

“ At school, work, universities, TAFE, transport services (eg bus, train, tram), supermarkets. Places where students mostly spend their time. The place should be out and open to the public to see or the school population. This would make the vaccine feel more safer to take, as they are being advertised in a place for students.” – 16 year old, Female, Centre-Southern Adelaide

“ More easily accessible and trustworthy information, since lots of young people don’t watch TV and the information available on social media is often just made up by conspiracy theorists.” – 18 year old, Female, Centre-Southern Adelaide

“ Instagram, but only spread through sites we know to be credible so we do not confuse it for misinformation. Perhaps the SA Health Instagram page could post like they do on Facebook.” – 18 year old, Female, North Western Adelaide

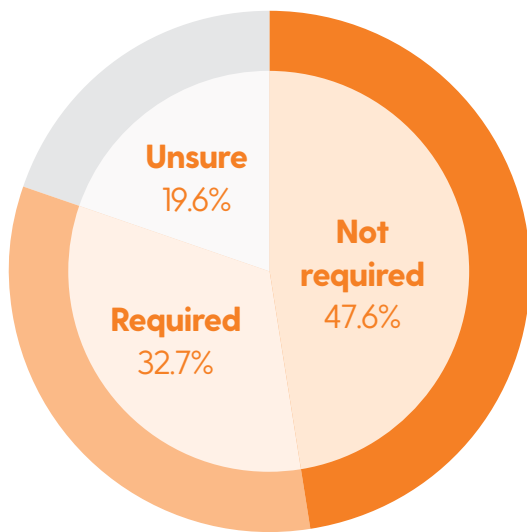
They thought information about COVID-19 vaccines would be most powerful if it:

- was clear and tailored to different age groups rather than “treating us all like little kids who don’t know anything”
- came from and was designed by and for other children and young people themselves
- came from adults they trust, including parents and carers, teachers, SA Health and other experts, and celebrities and influencers
- was shared in a way that addressed their concerns but was also fun and engaging; and
- was shared in a way that focused on building young men’s understanding.

As one 17 year old from Adelaide Hills told us, “they [young men] really think they’re not gonna catch it. [COVID]”.

“ Information from trusted adults who could explain it in a way that is completely unbiased. I have found that when listening to government officials speaking of vaccination, they are highly biased in favour of vaccination, never shining a light on the opposite side, such as side effects and honest statistics regarding vaccination. If there was to be a completely honest and unbiased talk regarding vaccination that does not leave undesirable parts of the situation in the dark, I would be very interested in hearing that.” – 15 year old, Female, Centre-Southern Adelaide

Parental consent



- Almost half (47.6%) of the young people surveyed said young people aged 12 to 15 years should be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine without parental consent
- 1 in 3 (32.7%) thought that parental consent should be required before a young person aged 12 to 15 years gets vaccinated; and
- 1 in 5 (19.6%) were unsure.

Those who thought young people aged 12 to 15 years should be able to get vaccinated gave the following reasons:

- some young people in this age group may have different views to their parents, and in some cases parent's views may have negative effects on a young person's future and health
- getting vaccinated is part of a child's right to healthcare
- if it is a young person's body, it should be their choice
- old enough and mature enough to understand and make an informed decision (as long as they are informed); and
- vaccination is key to 'getting back to normal' and protecting the community, particularly the most vulnerable.

- “ My sister attempted to get one but was ill advised by a parental guardian.”
– 14 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully
- “ Because we should all be getting vaccinated, even if parents/caregivers are anti-vaxxers.”
– 12 year old, Norwood, Payneham and Saint Peters

Some thought getting parental consent to be the ideal situation, but that in cases where this is not possible, young people should have the right to get vaccinated without it.

Those who thought that young people aged 12 to 15 years should need parental consent before getting vaccinated against COVID-19 gave the following explanations:

- “There are lots of other things that this age group can't do (drink alcohol, drive a car, take Panadol, etc.) so why would this be any different?”
- “This age group may not know enough (eg about their own medical history) to make an informed decision without their parent's guidance, and can be easily influenced by peer pressure or other factors.”
- “Parents and ‘whole families’ are responsible for this decision because they ‘know what's best for their child’.”
- “If a young person experienced adverse side effects, it would be even worse if their parent was not informed they had had the vaccine.”

“ They can’t vote, drink alcohol, drive a car, get a boob job, the list goes on. They should not be able to be coerced into getting a medical procedure their parents do not consent to.”

– 18 year old, Female, Port Adelaide Enfield

“ I think that they should get given all of the information and make sure it is safe for them. Maybe look into why the parents are saying no?” – 15 year old, Female, Adelaide Hills

Those who were unsure felt that their answer depended on the circumstances of individual young people, including their maturity, their parent’s situation, and their cultural or religious background. Some young people felt that those aged 15 years and older should be able to get vaccinated without parental consent, but those aged 12 to 14 years should not.

“ Well I feel a little confused since my father thinks it is all fake, where as my mother thinks that we should get vaccinated.”

– 13 year old, Female

Overall, they felt that communication is key and that ideally parents should know. But that ‘if you’re a kid who is feeling unsafe about COVID then you should also have the right to decide for yourself’.

“ We still haven’t had the vaccine for long. It could have effects in the future. Parents may fear for their child, so both should communicate with each other to come to a decision both parties agree on.” – 14 year old, Campbelltown

“ In some cases it would be very helpful, like for example, if someone has anti-vaccine parents, but in other cases it could be very harmful, like if a 12–15 year old had an illness they don’t know a lot about that when combined with the vaccine could put them in a critical condition.” – 13 year old, Gender-Diverse, Onkaparinga

PART 2

Information about the COVID-19 pandemic more broadly

How much information about COVID-19 feels like it was made for people your age?

- Three quarters (75.6%) of young survey respondents felt that only ‘a little’ or ‘not much at all’ of the information they had seen about COVID-19 was made for people their age.
- While 20.1% felt that a ‘fair amount’ was age-appropriate, less than 5% thought that ‘a lot’ was made for people their age.
- This split was similar across age groups, with no significant differences between those aged 12 to 15 years and those aged 16 to 18 years.

How much of the information you've heard about COVID-19 feels like it was made for people your age?	Number of responses	% of responses
A lot	21	4.2%
A fair amount	101	20.1%
A little	215	42.8%
Not much at all	165	32.9%

- “ I feel like kids were left out of the conversation so it's hard to understand what is happening around the COVID-19 pandemic.” – 13 year old, Female, North Western Adelaide
- “ Most information I have been getting is from the news and can be very confusing and overwhelming for younger people, but the information I have received from my parents has been well explained in a way I can understand.” – 13 year old, Gender-Diverse, Onkaparinga
- “ Because most of the people I see getting vaccinated are adults and none are young people.” – 14 year old, Male, Tea Tree Gully (North Western)
- “ I can see young people not finding the content itself confusing – but the sheer amount of content confusing and overwhelming. I myself have had to leave social media for a while simply because I couldn't even handle it. There is so much fast paced information that I think even fully grown adults are sick of it.” – 18 year old, Male

What information is missing?

“ More information on how it impacts young people! Last year, we were told that young people are at little to no risk with COVID, but now we've seen high infection rates among young people during the delta outbreak.”
– 17 year old, Female, Campbelltown

When asked if there was anything missing in the information they were getting about the pandemic, young people said there was a lack of information about the following:

- how COVID-19 – particularly the Delta strain – actually affects children and young people, and what might happen to them if they get COVID-19
- how many people have been sick, hospitalised, or have died due to COVID-19, including how many were vaccinated
- how many people who have recovered from COVID-19 and what their experiences have been
- what the potential side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines are versus ‘why we should take it’ (“what does it do to the female reproductive system???”)
- why they are pushing for everyone to get this vaccine compared to other vaccines
- how many vaccine doses you need, including booster shots
- how do the vaccines work and how they made the COVID-19 vaccines so fast
- why vaccines haven't been approved for children under 12 years old yet

- what the ‘future of COVID’ is and ‘where it could take us (long COVID)’, including a clearer idea of the time frames for the current restrictions (‘a lot of blaming, not a lot of solutions’)
- where COVID-19 started
- what’s happening in other countries and how they are responding to the pandemic; and
- why young people need to wear masks at high school.

“ Long term health repercussions. Also why are there no positives and negatives broadcast to the general public. It's all ‘yes inject this to your body because we are adults and we say it's okay’.” – 16 year old, Female, Mount Barker District Council

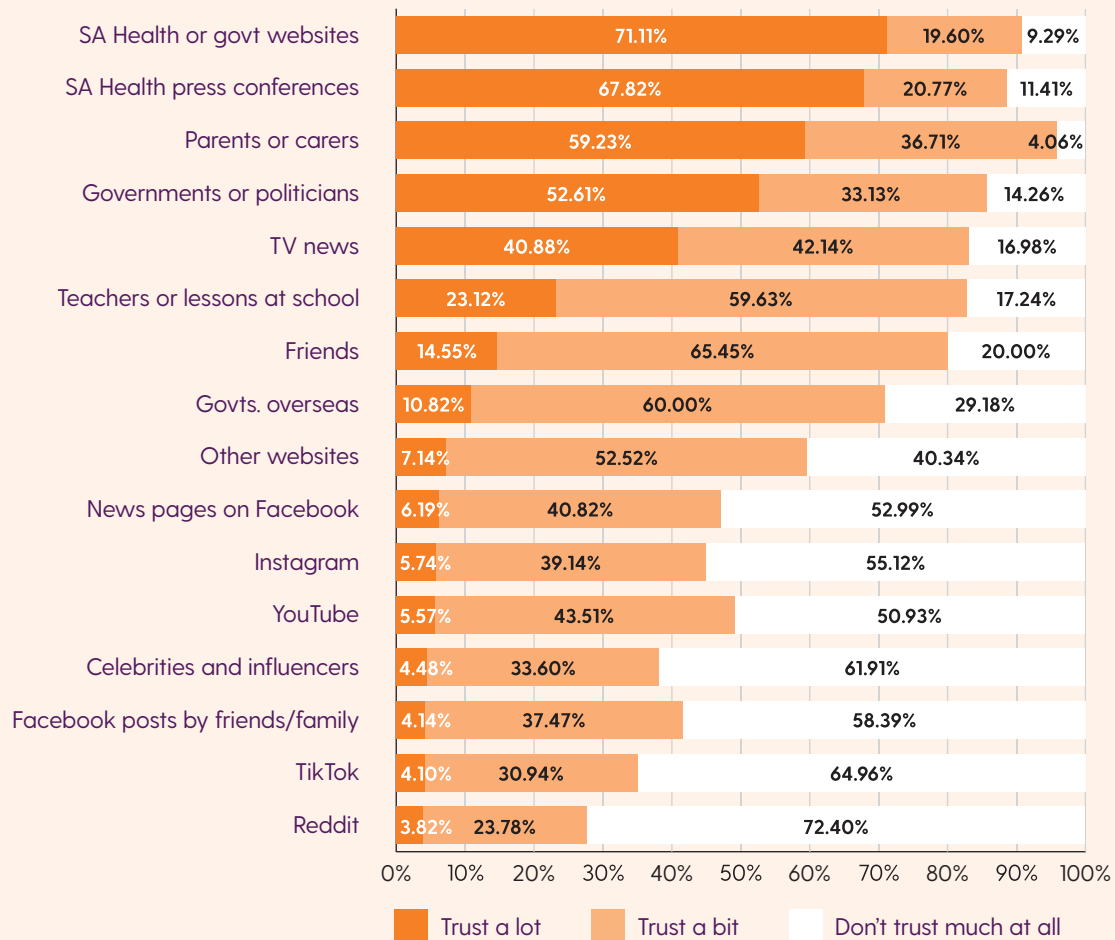
“ Information about people getting sick from the vaccine. I heard that a boy at Pembroke died, but the news didn't report it.” – 13 year old, Female, Central Southern Adelaide

Others did not think that a ‘lack of information’ was the biggest issue – rather, there is ‘lots out there’ but that it doesn't seem to be made for young people, and it ‘needs to be better spread so younger generations see it and are aware of it’.

Some young people noted that ‘we don't know what we don't know’ and that there's ‘a lot we aren't told about’. Others noted a lot of ‘gaps and fake news’ ‘spreading fear rather than information’.

Trust in information

Q15: How much do you trust these as sources of information about COVID-19?



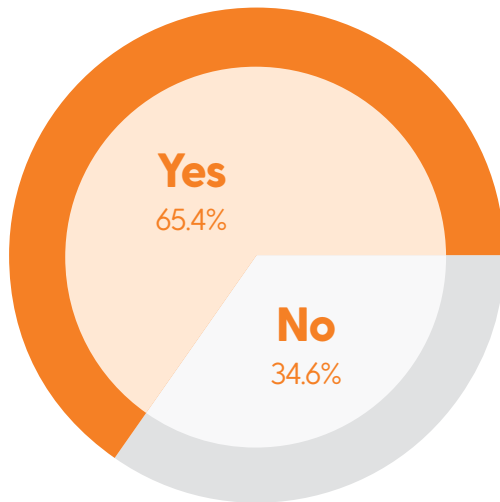
Young people trusted the following sources of information about the COVID-19 pandemic the most:

- SA Health or government websites (71% trust a lot)
- SA Health press conferences (67.8% trust a lot)
- Parents or Carers (59.2% trust a lot, 36.7% trust a bit)
- Australian Governments or Politicians (52.6% trust a lot)
- TV News (40.9% trust a lot, 42.1% trust a bit)
- Teachers or lessons at school (23% trust a lot, 59.6% trust a bit)
- Friends (14.6% trust a lot, 65.5% trust a bit)

The following sources were the least trustworthy:

- Reddit (72% 'don't trust much at all')
- TikTok (65% 'don't trust much at all')
- Celebrities and Influencers (61.9% 'don't trust much at all')
- Facebook posts by Friends/Family (58.4% 'don't trust much at all')
- Instagram (55% 'don't trust much at all')
- News pages on Facebook (53% 'don't trust much at all')
- YouTube (51% 'don't trust much at all')

Do young people want more information about COVID-19?



- Two thirds of 12 to 18 year olds surveyed (65.4%) said they would like to see more information about COVID-19.
- One third (34.6%) said they would not like to see more information about COVID-19.

Young people who wanted to see more information said that:

- it is important and a human right to be informed and that 'relevant, digestible, accessible and child-friendly' language and information would make them feel safer and confident
- they want to see more young people getting the vaccine; and
- they want to see more information about what they said was missing and designed by experts, but in places they go (both online and offline).

“ I think there should be news segments that teach the basic biology of how viruses work and how the vaccine works. Majority of fear comes from a lack of understanding.

Knowing how it works will make people take it more seriously and follow necessary precautions.” – 15 year old, Gender Diverse, Mount Barker District Council

“ More about the other side, not all one sided and fear based.” – 17, Female, North-Western Adelaide

Those who did not want more information about COVID-19 said that:

- they just want to live their lives and 'be a kid again'
- they already have enough or too much information ("it's all anyone ever talks about") and it has become repetitive and depressing after more than a year
- they are worried and sick of it, particularly when there are other important issues and people dying of other things that are also serious but don't get as much attention; and
- the reality is that we will eventually have to live with it and treat it like other diseases.

“ I would like it to disappear. I just want to enjoy school without a mask and play my sport.” – 13 year old, Female, Central and Southern Adelaide

“ News is flooded with it. I want to see other news stories, preferably good news. Everything is so depressing at the moment.” – 14 year old, Female, North-Western Adelaide

“ Most people are following the rules but the rules are confusing and inconsistent. I miss my friends in lockdowns. From what I understand, I am not at risk of severe disease from COVID 19. I just want life to go back to normal.” – 14 year old, Female, North-Western Adelaide

PART 3

COVID-19 restrictions

Overwhelmingly, young people understand that restrictions are important public health measures in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Many respondents also shared an appreciation for how lucky we are in South Australia compared to other parts of the country or world.

At the same time, young people felt that there was little understanding among adults – both the parents and teachers in their lives – but also adults in the media and leaders across government, about the unique and disproportionate impacts that COVID-19 has on all aspects of their lives. Particularly their social lives, relationships, and experiences at home and school.

“ I can't live my life as an 18 year old 'cause of the restrictions. My freedom and fun has been taken away for me, especially when I'm about to graduate yr 12 and I can't make plans because we might go into another lock

down. Life has been unpredictable and it's so hard to make plans.” – 18 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

“ I've been having it hard right now. My mother doesn't believe in masks or the vaccine and I've been sneaking around her back wearing a mask, and have said no to going out with her every time she asks. I've not gone out in so long besides going to school and it's so hard. If I have a parent that continuously tries to tell me about the government and vaccines and masks are bad, and yet I can still educate myself, so can everyone else.” – 14 year old, Port Adelaide Enfield

Restrictions which impact on young people most:

1. Lockdowns
2. Limits on numbers of people at events
3. Wearing face masks at school

Mental health and lockdowns

Young people are concerned about the mental health impacts any restrictions (particularly lockdowns) have over a long period of time.

- They have serious concerns for friends who became suicidal during previous lockdowns, and felt hopeless that they could not support them in any practical way.
- They spoke about how online learning is hard, and how the amount of work ‘puts us behind’.
- Others were focused on how lockdown exacerbated poverty (lost work, lost jobs, lost access to safe places). They described the difficulty of balancing the need to minimise COVID-19 with the need to keep people (particularly young people) socially connected and supported for their livelihoods, as well as for their mental and physical health.
- Some thought lockdowns were ‘necessary even though it sucks’ while others ‘personally don’t mind lockdowns’ as a break from social pressures, or because they ‘learn better at home’, even though they knew this wasn’t the case for everyone.
- Others said lockdowns proved particularly tough for those without financial support or access to digital devices and data.
- Some young people highlighted that ‘there’s got to be another solution’ and that it’s time to find a ‘new normal together’.

“ We have not been able to see our friends, family. I have developed anxiety from how everything has changed so quickly. I also know people who are wearing a mask at school despite having a valid medical reason not to (such as asthma) because they are afraid to be judged.” – 14 year old, Port Adelaide Enfield

“ Mental health is an overlooked priority in these lockdowns. Instead of making the lockdowns less frequent, it should be aimed to make them better. To be clear, I am not an advocate for the protests that happened earlier this year. I believe in the necessity of lockdowns as much as everyone else. However, addressing mental health as an issue is something that still needs to be done... Publicising it and addressing it may help those struggling to not be ashamed of how they feel. Publicising dedicated organisations that help with these issues is also important. I think the risk of transmission with seeing a therapist, close friend, or family member needs to be re-evaluated and compared to the risk of what may happen if people can’t do these things. I believe the issues with mental health and lockdowns is one that needs proper systems in place to ensure that people who still need help [do] receive it.” – 16 year old, Male, Tea Tree Gully

Wearing masks at school

Young people understand face masks are an important measure to reduce COVID-19 transmission in public places. However, they highlighted the significant impacts of wearing masks in high schools on their learning and communication, self-esteem and health.

Specifically, young people said that wearing masks at school:

- makes it difficult to concentrate and to breathe properly at school, particularly during tests when they are already stressed
- can make acne worse and cause rashes on skin, impacting confidence and body image at a time of development where concerns about how young people look are particularly important. At the same time, one 15-year-old said that they ‘have gotten used to a face mask’ and are ‘now self-conscious of my face without a mask’
- made them concerned about the potential impacts on health, including ‘how much oxygen is getting into our brains’ and the impacts of ‘not wearing them properly’ or ‘breathing in your own germs’
- is particularly difficult for people who wear glasses, or people who are deaf, or have learning or communication difficulties
- creates tension between students who are and who aren’t wearing masks, even those who have a valid reason not to; and
- seems unfair when young people are also seeing adults on TV, or at the footy going out without a mask. Or when teachers don’t properly wear their masks, or when classrooms do not have proper ventilation.

“ I see so many people daily, wearing them incorrectly, and school is a difficult place to social distance when our desks are thirty centimetres apart.” – 13 year old, Male, North-Western Adelaide

“ Seeing how lockdowns are impacting friends and their families. Also heaps of people without work now and lost their jobs. Wearing face masks at school is ridiculous. Originally schools were the safest place to be, now wearing a face mask 6+ hours a day. How do we know if this is impacting our health? You need fresh oxygen, not breathing in your own germs.” – 17 year old, Female, North-Western Adelaide

“ Wearing face masks has become quite irritating – giving me acne and I also feel like I cannot breathe, especially at school in tests when I become stressed. Lockdowns are infuriating especially when you are in year 11.” – 16 year old, Female, Port Adelaide Enfield

Other concerns about restrictions

Some young people felt there were no clear explanations for why certain restrictions were being put in place. They said they were confused by the contradictions, such as ‘if you stop dance classes you shouldn’t let people in to play football’.

“ The current ban on dancing and singing is impacting small businesses and the arts/music industry and is unfair to attendees of events in which the attendees are in low numbers anyway. The point made to argue the ban of dancing and singing for the prevention of individuals getting too close, is almost hypocritical – large scale sporting events are still going ahead with thousands packed into a stadium?” – 17 year old, Female, Central Southern Adelaide

Other concerns young people expressed were related to whether current restrictions “are even working and to missing family interstate and overseas. Some wanted everything to go back to normal. Others were concerned about the future, and having missed out on key rites of passage such as 18th birthdays, music festivals, and school events such as formals and graduations. They linked these concerns to being cut off from decisions and information and to being treated as though COVID doesn’t affect young people.

“ People my age generally want to party and have fun, and enjoy going out before they are tied down to full-time jobs, rent, bills, moving out, having to financially support themselves, Uni, starting a family, kids. The last few years of high school are some of the last opportunities to let loose and have fun before all the BIG responsibilities are placed on us and having all these restrictions placed – while necessary – affects our social lives in a far greater way than people in a younger or older age bracket. With milestone birthdays, formals, graduations, celebratory events, holidays with friends, before we all leave high school all having to be cancelled and missed out on, preventing some of what should have been some of the greatest nights of our adolescence.”
– 17 year old, Female, Mitcham

Young people would like more information about why there is not more freedom when there are no cases in the state. Some worried that wearing masks all the time means ‘we are becoming desensitised to how to wear/dispose of them properly, so when we do need to follow proper protocol people won’t’.

“ In times when there are no active community cases we should be offered more freedoms on the basis that we are prepared to go back into lockdown if more cases appear.” – 17 year old, Female

“ There’s no Covid in South Australia at the moment, so there should be no restrictions. It is causing frustration and anger and mistrust in the government and people are losing jobs and money.” – 14 year old, Female, North-Western Adelaide

Thoughts on 'vaccine passport'

Young people had mixed views about the possibility of a 'vaccine passport' or rules that would only let people do certain things if they are vaccinated.

- Those who supported the concept explained their view that vaccination was the 'only way out of constant lockdowns and travel restrictions' and that this will help us return to normal sooner. They felt that vaccine passports are a good incentive for those who are not yet vaccinated, and that it makes our community safe.
- Those who opposed the concept were worried it was unfair and discriminatory, particularly for those who can't get vaccinated for whatever reason (including being too young) or those who don't have a phone. Also that it would cause division and conflict between friends and family; could be used to control people; or that it was 'stupid' given that vaccinated people can still get COVID and spread it, or that this had never happened for previous vaccines.
- A significant number of young people, including those who supported the concept in principle, felt there should be different rules for children and young people (younger children especially) compared to adults, to ensure children were not disproportionately impacted.

- Others felt it should only come into effect once vaccines are more accessible to more of the population, and more researched. They also felt that vaccine passports should not be 'an excuse to disregard other restrictions' and that it might be appropriate for higher-risk activities such as travel, but not for everyday activities such as going to restaurants.

“ I would like vaccine passports, but if my mum won't let me get the vaccine I won't be able to do activities. Unless 12-15s can get the vaccine without parental permission the vaccine passport is not a good idea.” – 14 year old, Female, Charles Sturt

“ I think the government needs to address the issues and reasonings that people have to not take the vaccine before implementing this law. Because if people are concerned for it because they are unaware of how the vaccine works and the repercussions that may or may not occur, then you may be punishing people who are just confused and scared – which will make people angry and riots could occur.” – 17 year old, Mitcham

“ I think it's a good idea in theory. Helping those who did the right thing to be able to get back into normal life. However, it could affect those that are still scared of the vaccine due to how new it is. Or children of anti vacs, who aren't allowed to get the vaccine.” – 16 year old, Non-binary, Tea Tree Gully

“ I feel as though that makes me want to be vaccinated because I want to be able to do those things, but I am scared of the dangers (if there are any) of getting vaccinated.” – 14 year old, Female

What do young people want adults to do to better support them through the COVID-19 pandemic?

“*Educate us! Let us have our voice and don't just assume we know when we aren't being taught. They don't educate us, and then make decisions for us when we're equally as affected.*” – 15 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

- At school, they would like access to more professional counsellors and for teachers to understand that everyone is experiencing life during the pandemic differently.
- Other practical support young people suggested included providing financial support and mental health support for those who need it.

“Listen to us, reassure us and include us.”

- Young people want adults to acknowledge that COVID-19 affects children and young people too, and to try to empathise and understand what young people might be going through without comparing it to when they themselves were children. Growing up today in a global pandemic in the 21st century is completely different to any current adult's experiences of being young.
- They want adults to ask young people how they are feeling ‘because it has changed our social lives dramatically’ and to ‘check up on us’ and ‘provide us with a comfortable environment’.
- They want adults to be more flexible and avoid placing too much pressure and expectations on the children and young people in their lives, acknowledging what has been eighteen months of increased anxiety and uncertainty for everyone including young people.

“*Support for families who have parents who lost work, mental health that has been as a result of lockdowns, and stress on finishing High School, friends that are contemplating suicide.*” – 17 year old, female, North-Western Adelaide

“*Not gloss over our feelings. When we've suddenly gotten the news that we're going into lockdown adults don't check to see if people are going to be ok during lockdown. They don't check to see how we're feeling about going into lockdown. They kinda just say “We're going into lockdown so make sure you have access to the internet because of online classes”.*” – 14 year old, Female, Central and Southern Adelaide

“*Be more flexible. Lots of teachers don't take into account that the pandemic has hit every single student differently, and that some are struggling more than others.*” – 17 year old, Female, Adelaide Hills

“Relieve the pressure applied on us. Personally I apply the pressure on myself, however, I know a lot of my friend's parents expect the same result from them in their academics, even after lockdowns and changes between at-home learning and in-class learning.”
– 15 year old, Female, Charles Sturt

“Perhaps complain less if they are in a lucky situation as kids are growing up without travel, music concerts, or dancing at events, whereas they have experienced those things in their past.” – 18 year old, Female, North-Western Adelaide

“Inform us”

- Young people want adults to explain to them what's going on 'without acting like they're better than us'. They want information about COVID and lockdowns explained in a simple way, both online and offline, including more conversations at schools about 'what is happening and what will happen next'.
- They want age-appropriate information: although they are aware that younger children can be scared, once young people get to high school it is frustrating when “things are hidden” or adults “treat us like babies” because “we are affected too”.
- Young people also wanted adults to stop spreading misinformation, to get vaccinated and follow the restrictions better. They also wanted adults to “show us young people getting the vaccine”.

“Understand that the young generations are growing up in a world of concern, it is after all our future that we have little say in at the moment, which causes stress and worry for what our future holds. Our generation also has a lot more mental health diagnosis' which create far more anxious, depressed,

stressed etc. people, who aren't yet taken seriously, understood or supported in the ways they need to be, as the adults don't properly know how to handle these issues that they didn't grow up dealing with.”
– 17 year old, Mitcham

“I feel like that I should go with what adults say, and that I don't have a say.” – 13 year old, Female

“Give us tools to form our own opinion, and rather than hating towards 'ant-vaxxers' or 'pro-vaxxers' try to see where they are coming from, find common ground, and come to a decision, which is inclusive of vulnerable people and which is safe.”
– 16 year old, Non-binary, Adelaide Hills

“Realize how bad their mental health can get and understand that they have a million different things that are on their minds. There would be family issues, school issues, the pressure of school, the added pressure of the pandemic, as well as any other mental health issues that may be present. Adults need to understand how hard things can get and that once you are in a headspace like that, it's hard to get out of it.” – 15 year old, Female, Tea Tree Gully

“Not give their opinion on if Covid is real or fake but to explain what is going on and what exactly we are meant to do about the situation.” – 13 year old, Female

“Not be selfish and controlling and blaming our bad mental health on our phones and taking them away. When phones get taken, our mental health gets worse, from personal experience.” – 13 year old, Non-binary, Tea Tree Gully

Conclusion

Although young South Australians are aware that South Australia has been relatively safe from the pandemic compared to other parts of the country and world, they have still been denied many of the opportunities and stability that previous generations have taken for granted. This includes a lack of opportunities to pursue further study, work, or to travel to music festivals and concerts, or participate in milestone events and other social gatherings that are typically attended by young people.

The insights from young people presented in this report have implications for leaders, and decision-makers in public places at both the state and local community levels.

This report provides an understanding of young people's day-to-day experiences of COVID restrictions, as well as the complex and diverse factors that influence the likelihood of them getting a vaccine. Their unique concerns about needles and short-term or long-term side effects, where they get their information from, and broader experiences or lack thereof, relationships with parents, teachers and peers are valid and must be respected.

This can help guide and instil confidence in our young people, on our handling of the pandemic and provide reassurance that we do have their best interests at heart.

Our appreciation of the unique impact the pandemic is having on young people, and our responses informed by their views and experiences, will help minimise long term negative outcomes.

