

Witness Name:

Professor Russell Viner

Dated: 10 October 2022

Ref: M2/SAGE/01/RV

COVID-19 INQUIRY – MODULE 2

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Questionnaire Response – Professor Russell Viner

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**1: Overview of qualifications, career history, professional expertise and major publications:**

**Qualifications**

1.1. The following table outlines my qualification:

**Table 1 – Qualification**

1986	Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (M.B., B.S.) with First Class Honours, University of Queensland
1993	Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.), Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge
1995	Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (FRACP) in Paediatrics
1997	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of Cambridge
2022	Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci)

**Employment History**

1.2. The following table outlines my employment history:

**Table 2 – Employment History**

Current Roles:	
2011 – Present	Professor of Adolescent Health, University College London (UCL)

2017 – Present	Director, NIHR Dept of Health Obesity Policy Research Unit (OPRU)
2019 – Present	Vice-Chair, NHS England Transformation Board for Children and Young People (2019-) and Chair, Stakeholder Council for the Transformation Board
2019 – Present	Member, NHS Assembly
2020 – Present	Non-Executive Director, Great Ormond St. Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust
2007– Present	Honorary Consultant in Adolescent Medicine and Endocrinology, UCL Hospitals
2021 - Present	Member, WHO Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on COVID-19 and Educational Settings, (2020-) and co-lead, Research Advisory Group on COVID-19 in Educational Settings
<b>Previous Roles:</b>	
1988 – 1992	Training Registrar in Paediatrics, Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane, Australia
1992 – 1996	PhD candidate University of Cambridge and Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Paediatrics, Addenbrookes Hospital Cambridge
1997 - 2007	Consultant in Adolescent Medicine & Endocrinology and Honorary Senior Lecturer, UCL Hospitals & Great Ormond St Hospital for Children
2007 – 2011	Reader in Adolescent Health, UCL Institute of Child Health and Honorary Consultant in Adolescent Medicine & Endocrinology, UCL Hospitals & Great Ormond St Hospital for Children

### **Professional Expertise:**

- 1.3. I am an academic paediatrician, being a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci), a Fellow of the Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health (FRCPCH) and a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (FRACP). I am currently employed by the UCL Great Ormond St. Institute of Child Health (ICH) as a professor of Adolescent Health (since 2012). My expertise is as a clinical epidemiologist and lies in child and adolescent public

health and policy, particularly relating to health services, mental health and obesity.

### **Publications**

1.4. My 5 key publications in the last 3 years have been:

- (1) Ward JL, Harwood R, Smith C, .... Viner RM. Risk factors for PICU admission and death among children and young people hospitalized with COVID-19 and PIMS-TS in England during the first pandemic year. **Nat Med**. 2022 Jan;28(1):193-200. doi: 10.1038/s41591-021-01627-9. Epub 2021 Dec 20.
- (2) Ward JL, GBD 2019 Adolescent Mortality Collaborators... Viner RM (senior author). Global, regional, and national mortality among young people aged 10-24 years, 1950-2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019. **Lancet**. 2021 Oct 30;398(10311):1593-1618. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01546-4. Epub 2021 Oct 28.
- (3) Viner RM, Mytton OT, Bonell C, Melendez-Torres GJ, Ward J, Hudson L, Waddington C, Thomas J, Russell S, van der Klis F, Koirala A, Ladhani S, Panovska-Griffiths J, Davies NG, Booy R, Eggo RM. Susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Children and Adolescents Compared With Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. **JAMA Pediatr**. 2021 Feb 1;175(2):143-156. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.4573.
- (4) Viner RM, Russell SJ, Croker H, Packer J, Ward J, Stansfield C, Mytton O, Bonell C, Booy R. School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: a rapid systematic review. **Lancet Child Adolesc Health**. 2020 May;4(5):397-404. doi: 10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30095-X. Epub 2020 Apr 6.
- (5) Bonell C, ... Viner RM. Effects of the Learning Together intervention on bullying and aggression in English secondary schools (INCLUSIVE): a cluster randomised controlled trial. **Lancet**. 2018 Nov 22. pii: S0140-6736(18)31782-3. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31782-3.

**2: List of groups I participated in and the relevant time period:**

- 2.1. I was a member of SAGE, SPI-B and the Children's Task & Finish Group (CTFG) between 2020 and 2021.

**3: Overview of involvement in groups between January 2020 and February 2022:**

- 3.1. I was invited to my first SAGE meeting by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Professor Chris Whitty as I had worked with his team on 2 systematic reviews on the impact of coronaviruses on first pregnancy and childbirth and second on children. I was invited by the CMO because of my scientific expertise and I believe also because I was at the time elected President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), and could therefore access the resources of the RCPCH if needed.
- 3.2. These reviews were presented to SAGE at my first meeting (SAGE 14) and I was asked to be available to speak to the SAGE participants. I did not speak at SAGE 14 in actuality.
- 3.3. My role in these groups was very circumscribed, relating only to provision of advice about children and teenagers and schools in terms of broader public health issues around infection and the impacts of interventions on schooling, obesity and wellbeing and mental health.
- 3.4. My role was predominantly on the CTFG and my attendance at SAGE itself only related to times when children and/or schools were being discussed or relevant. I carefully restricted myself to areas where I had expertise or could add value; I played no role in any SAGE meeting in discussions about broader non-pharmaceutical interventions related to adults. I attended a total of 10 SAGE meetings.
- 3.5. I attended 14 CTFG meetings between April 2020 and January 2021.
- 3.6. In terms of children and SARS-CoV-2, I used my expertise in evidence synthesis/systematic reviewing to carefully gather all emerging evidence on severity of disease, susceptibility and transmission of infection in children and teenagers. In this I worked with experts in infectious diseases in childhood and undertook a number of systematic reviews of emerging international data.

Some of this work was prompted by discussions in SAGE sub-groups and some I undertook within my personal academic capacity, and I fed back my findings to the CMO and SAGE

- 3.7. I also participated in a sub-group of CTFG concerning schools and Covid-19. We met on 2 occasions (13 January 2021 and 24 June 2021).
- 3.8. Additionally, I co-led with Professor Chris Bonell 2 workshops for SPI-B on promoting men's adherence to public health measures during the pandemic. The papers resulting from these workshops, which discussed ways in which men and particularly young men could be encouraged to participate in public health non-pharmaceutical interventions, were later presented to SAGE.
- 3.9. Finally, I attended a group on data on behalf of SPI-B on 2 occasions (23 November 2020 and 18 December 2020). This meeting chaired by the National Statistician considered broader national data needs at this stage of the pandemic. I had a very minor role in this meeting and cannot recall my input to these meetings. I am not in possession of any documents to aid my recollection.

**4: Summary of documents to which I contributed for the purposes of advising the groups above:**

**Coronavirus in pregnancy and delivery: repaid review and expert consensus for further detail**

[\(Coronavirus in pregnancy and delivery: rapid review and expert consensus, 9 March 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)\)](#)

- 4.1. This document included observations that children can be infected with Covid-19 and mostly experience mild illness, with less incidence of fever (limited evidence, low confidence). They likely transmit Covid-19, but there are no data on this.
- 4.2. For pregnant women infected with Covid-19, there is some evidence of premature delivery. There is no evidence of vertical transmission (mothers passing Covid-19 to unborn children). It did not appear that Covid-19 posed more of a risk to pregnant women than other infections, but the risk of premature



delivery meant that they should have been considered in plans for vulnerable groups.

- 4.3. Note that the views in this document were based upon information available at the time.
- 4.4. I agreed to share evidence on impacts of isolation and hospitalisation of children with Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England to inform policy development and NHS planning.

#### **Susceptibility and transmission of COVID-19 in children**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/889050/s0258-viner-eggo-susceptibility-transmission-in-children-updates-250420-sage30.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/889050/s0258-viner-eggo-susceptibility-transmission-in-children-updates-250420-sage30.pdf))

- 4.5. On 23 April 2020 and 28 April 2020, Dr Rosalind Eggo from LSHTM and I were asked to prepare a paper on susceptibility and transmission of COVID-19 in children.
- 4.6. At SAGE 30 meeting on 30 April 2020 the participants discussed outputs from the CTFG including modelling on school closures and relaxation of this; Dr Rosalind Eggo and my paper on susceptibility and transmission ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888804/S0399\\_Thirtieth\\_SAGE\\_meeting\\_on\\_Covid-19\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888804/S0399_Thirtieth_SAGE_meeting_on_Covid-19_.pdf)).
- 4.7. At SAGE 31 meeting on 1 May 2020, I attended a special SAGE meeting on children with Sir Patrick Vallance the Government Chief Scientific Adviser and CMO Chris Whitty. At the meeting the susceptibility paper and my systematic review on coronaviruses and schools and the work from CTSG were considered regarding the re-opening of schools. ([School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: a rapid systematic review - The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health](#))
- 4.8. At SAGE 38 meeting on 21 May 2020, CTFG's paper on social distancing measures in schools were discussed, however I was not present at this meeting ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888804/S0399\\_Thirtieth\\_SAGE\\_meeting\\_on\\_Covid-19\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888804/S0399_Thirtieth_SAGE_meeting_on_Covid-19_.pdf)).

[attachment\\_data/file/895859/S0420 TFC Comments on Sequencing of Social Distancing Measures Schools .pdf](#)).

- 4.9. At SAGE meeting 46 on 9 July 2020, CTFG's paper on risk of reopening educational settings in September 2020 was considered. I contributed to the evidence in this report on susceptibility and transmission and severity of illness in children

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/903374/S0621 Risks associated with the reopening of education settings in Sept.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903374/S0621 Risks associated with the reopening of education settings in Sept.pdf)).

## **5: Summary of articles, interviews and/or evidence:**

- 5.1. The published documents which summarise the work I undertook during the pandemic are summarised below:

- (1) Mullins E, Evans D, Viner RM, O'Brien P, Morris E. Coronavirus in pregnancy and delivery: rapid review. *Ultrasound Obstet Gynecol*. 2020 May;55(5):586-592. doi: 10.1002/uog.22014. PMID: 32180292.
- (2) Systematic review of school closure and management practices: Viner RM, Russell SJ, Croker H, Packer J, Ward J, Stansfield C, Mytton O, Bonell C, Booy R. School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: a rapid systematic review. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health*. 2020 May;4(5):397-404. doi: 10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30095-X. Epub 2020 Apr 6.
- (3) Viner RM, Mytton OT, Bonell C, Melendez-Torres GJ, Ward J, Hudson L, Waddington C, Thomas J, Russell S, van der Klis F, Koirala A, Ladhani S, Panovska-Griffiths J, Davies NG, Booy R, Eggo RM. Susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Children and Adolescents Compared With Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2020 Sep 25:e204573. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.4573
- (4) Viner RM, Ward JL, Hudson LD, Ashe M, Patel SV, Hargreaves D, Whittaker E. Systematic review of reviews of symptoms and signs of COVID-19 in children and adolescents. *Arch Dis Child*. 2020 Dec

17:archdischild-2020-320972. doi: 10.1136/archdischild-2020-320972. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33334728; PMCID: PMC7747494.

- (5) Panovska-Griffiths J, Kerr CC, Stuart RM, Mistry D, Klein DJ, Viner RM, Bonell C. Determining the optimal strategy for reopening schools, the impact of test and trace interventions, and the risk of occurrence of a second COVID-19 epidemic wave in the UK: a modelling study. *Lancet Child Adolescent Health*. 2020 Nov;4(11):817-827. doi: 10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30250-9. Epub 2020 Aug 3.
- (6) Bonell C, Melendez-Torres GJ, Viner RM, Rogers MB, Whitworth M, Rutter H, Rubin GJ, Patton G. An evidence-based theory of change for reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission in reopened schools. *Health Place*. 2020 Jul;64:102398. doi: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2020.102398. Epub 2020 Jul 21.
- (7) Panovska-Griffiths J, Kerr CC, Waites W, Stuart RM, Mistry D, Foster D, Klein DJ, Viner RM, Bonell C (joint senior author). Modelling the potential impact of mask use in schools and society on COVID-19 control in the UK. *Sci Rep*. 2021 Apr 22;11(1):8747. doi: 10.1038/s41598-021-88075-0. PMID: 33888818; PMCID: PMC8062670.
- (8) Walsh S, Chowdhury A, Braithwaite V, Russell S, Birch JM, Ward JL, Waddington C, Brayne C, Bonell C, Viner RM, Mytton OT. Do school closures and school reopenings affect community transmission of COVID-19? A systematic review of observational studies. *BMJ Open*. 2021 Aug 17;11(8):e053371. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-053371.
- (9) Behnood SA, Shafran R, Bennett SD, Zhang A, O'Mahoney LL, Stephenson TJ, Ladhani SN, DeStavola BL, Viner RM (joint senior author), Swann OV. Persistent symptoms following SARS-CoV-2 infection among children and young people: a meta-analysis of controlled and uncontrolled studies. *J Infect*. 2021 Nov 20:S0163-4453(21)00555-7. doi: 10.1016/j.jinf.2021.11.011. Online ahead of print.
- (10) Ward JL, Harwood R, Smith C, .... Viner RM. Risk factors for PICU admission and death among children and young people hospitalized with COVID-19 and PIMS-TS in England during the first pandemic year. *Nat*



Med. 2022 Jan;28(1):193-200. doi: 10.1038/s41591-021-01627-9. Epub 2021 Dec 20.

- (11) Smith C, Odd D, Harwood R, Ward J, Linney M, Clark M, Hargreaves D, Ladhani SN, Draper E, Davis PJ, Kenny SE, Whittaker E, Luyt K, Viner R, Fraser LK. Deaths in children and young people in England after SARS-CoV-2 infection during the first pandemic year. Nat Med. 2021 Nov 11. doi: 10.1038/s41591-021-01578-1. Online ahead of print.
  - (12) Viner R, Waddington C, Mytton O, Booy R, Cruz J, Ward J, Ladhani S, Panovska-Griffiths J, Bonell C, Melendez-Torres GJ. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 by children and young people in households and schools: A meta-analysis of population-based and contact-tracing studies. J Infect. 2021 Dec22:S0163-4453(21)00633-2. doi: 10.1016/j.jinf.2021.12.026. Epub ahead of print.
- 5.2. I did not undertake any interviews on behalf of SAGE during the pandemic, with the exception of a Science Media Centre briefing on the Covid-19 omicron variant and children, that I undertook with others on 13 January 2022.

**Media in my roles as UCL academic and President of the RCPCH.**

- 5.3. Please see annexes A and B

**6: Views as to whether the work of the above groups in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic succeeded in its aims.**

- 6.1. I can only speak about expertise on children and young people. The composition of the CTFG was strongly multidisciplinary and brought together experts from SPI-B and SPI-M and included strong expertise on children and infection and indirect impacts. Participants worked effectively together and with the appropriate government departments. Appropriate resources and support were made available if required.
- 6.2. At all times advice and recommendations were carefully discussed and based upon the best available evidence, from review of the international available data and UK available data.

- 6.3. Our work was designed to brief SAGE and particularly the GCSA (Vallance) and CMO (Whitty). Vallance and Whitty were highly interested in and supportive of the CTFG's work around children and young people and I understand they used these to brief Ministers.

**7: Lessons that can be learned**

- 7.1. My belief is that lessons should be high-level. I believe that the pandemic highlighted that the health and education systems for children had largely become disconnected prior to the pandemic and that whilst the systems over time came to work together well, an ongoing piece of learning is the importance of both health protection and health promotion within educational systems in the UK.

**8: Documents that I hold**

- 8.1. I hold copies of all the publications noted in section 5 above, although all are available on public access online.

1. [Mental health problems more common in young children with long Covid](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Institute of Child Health) said that new data “confirms the concerns about rising rates of mental health problems among children and young people.”  
1 March 2022
2. [Is low vaccine rate a factor in child Covid infections?](#)  
Professor Christina Pagel (UCL Mathematics) and Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) comment on the reasons behind a slow uptake of vaccinations among children in the UK.  
26 January 2022
3. [Should we be vaccinating babies against Covid?](#)  
Although more babies are ending up in hospital with Omicron, Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) says that the case for vaccinating under-fives is still “very marginal”.  
21 January 2022
4. [Should parents be worried about their children catching Omicron?](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) said that even if children end up in hospital with Covid, “the average length of stay was really low and almost none of them needed oxygen or other help.”  
19 January 2022
5. [Omicron variant puts more babies in hospital](#)  
Professor Christina Pagel (UCL Mathematics) and Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) discuss why the new Covid variant may be affecting younger children more.  
17 January 2022
6. [Hold scientific trials to see if face masks tackle Covid in schools](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) said rigorous studies are needed to “work out if and when we should be masking our teenagers”.  
10 January 2022
7. [Confusing messaging over vaccinations for children](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) said that “we haven’t covered ourselves with glory” on vaccinating 12 to 15-year-olds and admitted there had been some confusing messaging.  
4 January 2022
8. [Backlash against face masks in schools as Covid cases ease](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) has called for the order on face masks in schools to be kept under constant review

because they impact young people's ability to learn and socialise.

3 January 2022

9. [Why UK has been less keen than US to give Covid jab to children](#)

There are a number of reasons why the UK and US have taken a difference approach on Covid vaccines for children, for example, "US physicians are generally much more pro-interventionist," says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

16 December 2021

10. [Will protecting children from Covid make their immune systems more vulnerable to other illnesses?](#)

Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Institute of Child Health) has warned that "wrapping children in cotton wool" via lockdown and social distancing could "rebound at us" in years to come, as the lack of exposure to everyday bugs could leave immune systems more vulnerable.

23 November 2021

11. [There's no hiding from lockdown damage now](#)

"The indirect effects of the pandemic on children are likely to be significantly greater than the direct effects," says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

15 November 2021

12. [Only six healthy children died of Covid during England's first year of the pandemic](#)

A total of 25 youngsters died from the virus between March 2020 and February 2021 but the majority had underlying health conditions, which shows the comparatively small risk Covid poses to children, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

12 November 2021

13. [The pro-vax parents with vaccine-hesitant kids](#)

Hesitancy over the Covid vaccine doesn't mean that teenagers are anti-vaxxers rather, it's about "a lack of education," says Professor Russell Viner (Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

4 November 2021

14. [Risk of Covid-19 for teenagers is very small](#)

Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) said that both deaths from Covid-19 and side-effects from Covid-19 vaccines were extremely rare among teenagers, and that vaccinating teenagers was, on balance, in their best interests.

5 October 2021

15. [Younger children less willing to get Covid-19 jab than older pupils](#)



- A survey of more than 27,000 students showed that around 50% were willing to have a coronavirus, highlighting the need to “reach out and engage with young people,” to help them decide said Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
28 September 2021
16. [Children should know about tiny risk from vaccine](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) said that teenagers deserved to have information about the Covid vaccine presented with “transparency” and that the health arguments were “incredibly finely balanced”.  
20 September 2021
  17. [Why are children getting the Covid vaccine?](#)  
After taking broader issues into account Chief Medical Officers “decided that on balance we as a society should offer vaccines to all teenagers,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
15 September 2021
  18. [Covid vaccines for young people is a ‘good decision’](#)  
“Vaccinating 12-15 year olds remains a very marginal balance in medical terms, although with over 10 million teenagers vaccinated worldwide we are now much clearer about safety in this age-group,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
14 September 2021
  19. [Pfizer’s Covid jab only causes mild to moderate side effects in vulnerable teenagers](#)  
The findings that the Pfizer Covid jab produces few side effects in a group with severe disability and very high medical needs is “generally reassuring,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
27 August 2021
  20. [More information is needed before vaccinating teenagers](#)  
The reason for vaccinating teenagers against Covid would largely be to protect adults and “if we are going to do that then the safety bar needs to be exceptionally high,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
26 August 2021
  21. [Important benefits for vaccinating teenagers](#)  
“Vaccinating all 16 and 17-year-olds with the Pfizer vaccine is a welcome and sensible step given what we know about Covid-19 risks and the safety of vaccines in the age group,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
11 August 2021
  22. [Vaccinating older teenagers is a sensible step](#)

Vaccinations for children must balance risks, and “vaccinating older teenagers is a reasonable first step,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health), but Christina Pagel (UCL Mathematics) says the decision should have been made earlier.

5 August 2021

23. [Study on long-term Covid symptoms in children ‘reassuring’](#)

A study which has found a low proportion of children who catch Covid-19 have persistent symptoms “is much lower than reported in some other studies and is reassuring,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

4 August 2021

24. [Covid-19 pandemic not a reason to take children out of school](#)

An increase in the rates of children being homeschooled has been blamed on ‘Covid anxiety’, but the risks of the disease for children attending school are far lower than for adults, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

19 July 2021

25. [Risks of severe Covid-19 in children shown to be very low in largest study yet](#)

The risk of severe illness and death from Covid-19 is very low in children and teenagers, according to comprehensive analyses of public health data, led by researchers including Professor Russell Viner and Dr Joseph Ward (both UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

9 July 2021

26. [Schools could hold Covid vaccination clinics for teenagers](#)

A schools-based Covid vaccination programme would be the best choice if the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) decides vaccines should be given to youngsters, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

2 July 2021

27. [GPs must not confuse cases of long Covid with other ailments in teenagers](#)

It is important to remember that some Covid symptoms, such as very significant fatigue, “are very common in teenagers,” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

2 July 2021

28. [Young people should get Covid vaccine before they become biggest source of infection to the vulnerable](#)

By vaccinating all adults, the dynamics will change so that children and young people become the source of most infections, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

2 July 2021

29. [Society must repay its debt to the young](#)

While some aspects of life will go back to normal following Covid-19, others won't. As a result, "we must act to ensure that these very real 'wounds' don't scar" a generation of children, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

30 June 2021

30. [Half of teenagers suffering anxiety and trauma in wake of Covid lockdowns](#)

Half of teenagers have been left suffering anxiety and trauma in the wake of the Covid lockdowns, a systemic review in to the impact of school closures led by Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) has found.

30 June 2021

31. [Covid rules in schools should be reviewed](#)

"If all adults are vaccinated we need to think carefully about restrictions on schools" says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) with regards to Covid-19 restrictions.

28 June 2021

32. [Data on vaccines for children is based on low numbers](#)

While the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine appears safe in teenagers, more data is needed, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health), while Professor Francois Balloux (UCL Genetics Institute) says vaccinating children is an "ethical minefield".

28 June 2021

33. [Careful decision needs to be made on vaccinating children in England](#)

The decision about whether to vaccinate healthy teenagers "needs to balance risks and benefits for both young people and for broader society – and there are complex ethical and safety issues," says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

24 June 2021

34. [Covid-19 spread not solely due to schools](#)

"We opened schools [in March] and, contrary to what people suggested, [Covid-19] cases continued to fall. That tells us very clearly that this isn't just about children in schools," says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

10 June 2021

35. [We "should not rush" into decision on whether children are offered the Covid vaccine](#)

"The early reports provide a warning that we should not rush into these decisions," says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) reflecting on the side effects seen among young male recipients of the vaccine in



- Israel.  
7 June 2021
36. [Experts urge caution on giving vaccines to children in Britain](#)  
Health experts warn that children should only be immunised in special circumstances. But after all adults have been vaccinated “we will have accumulated much more knowledge of how safe vaccines are” says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
1 June 2021
37. [Moderna Covid-19 vaccine effective in teenagers](#)  
News that the Moderna vaccine is effective in teenagers is encouraging, but “there are still a range of complex questions to consider,” when it comes to vaccinating healthy teenagers, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
26 May 2021
38. [Schools not amplifying Covid-19 spread](#)  
Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health) says the data doesn’t support the idea that schools contribute to the spread of Covid-19 variants any more than communities generally.  
24 May 2021
39. [Prioritise vulnerable adults abroad for Covid-19 vaccines](#)  
The key risk for society is the “diversion of vaccines,” to low risk groups in countries who have vaccinated their adult populations, while vulnerable adults in other countries remain unvaccinated, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
14 May 2021
40. [‘Difficult to place value’ on long Covid study](#)  
A study which suggests children with long Covid suffer symptoms for an average of over eight months is interesting, but it is “very difficult to place value on the findings,” due to the methodology, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
17 March 2021
41. [School closures risk 'permanent scarring' to children](#)  
Keeping children away from the classroom does "serious harm" not only to their education but also to their mental and physical health, finds research led by Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).  
1 March 2021
42. [Schools can safely reopen if lockdown is maintained elsewhere](#)  
School reopening needs to be our highest priority and can be done safely as long as wider restrictions remain in place in march to keep the Covid-19 spread to a



minimum, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

23 February 2021

43. [School closures harm children's health and well-being](#)

School closures during Covid-19 lockdowns have led to a marked decrease in children's health and well-being, finds a review authored by Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

16 February 2021

44. [Wider lockdown key to preventing Covid-19 surge if schools reopen](#)

Wider restrictions must remain in place if schools reopen in March to keep the epidemic's R number below 1 in the UK, finds a study led by Dr Jasmina Panovska-Griffiths (UCL Epidemiology & Health) and Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

10 February 2021

45. [More children admitted to hospital for mental health reasons than physical ailments](#)

Social distancing has led to a reduction in the virus transmissions which usually lead to children requiring hospital treatment, with a shift towards more mental health problems among hospitalised children, says Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health).

20 January 2021

46. [Sage experts warn of impact of Covid-19 policies on the young](#)

Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) says that today's children are disadvantaged due to the coronavirus, adding that authorities "took away the protective net we throw around our children by closing schools and redeploying the children's health workforce."

20 October 2020

47. [Largest study confirms children significantly less likely to catch Covid-19](#)

Children and young people are around 40% per cent less likely to be infected than adults when exposed to someone with the virus, finds a new study of global Covid-19 transmission data, co-led by Professor Russell Viner (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health).

28 September 2020

48. [What are the health risks posed by schools reopening?](#)

Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) explains that when children do catch Covid-19, the symptoms are very mild and that there are few instances of children transmitting the disease, adding, "children are not the drivers of this pandemic."

14 August 2020

49. [Teachers and students urged to walk to school](#)

Commenting as ministers urge teachers and pupils to walk or cycle to school when they return in September, Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) says schools themselves play less of a role in transmitting coronavirus.

11 August 2020

50. [Pupils under lockdown may face obesity risk](#)

Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) describes the long-term health effects the lockdown may have on children, and raises concerns about fading healthy eating habits and the suspected rise in obesity as the pandemic continues.

15 June 2020

51. [Children half as likely to catch Covid-19 than adults](#)

Amidst concerns of children returning to school before it's safe, Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) comments on new research from UCL which indicates children and young people are 56% less likely to contract Covid-19 than adults.

22 May 2020

52. [Schools have little effect on the spread of Covid-19](#)

In a discussion on the decision to allow students to return to schools in the UK, Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) is mentioned for his review of schools and the results that schools pose little risk to the rates of infection of Covid-19.

18 May 2020

53. [Kawasaki-like disease in children related to Covid-19](#)

In a joint letter published in the Lancet, Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) and Elizabeth Whittaker describe new research which suggests a new Kawasaki-like disease has been found in child patients who are infected with Covid-19.

13 May 2020

54. [Main issue for schools is social distancing](#)

Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health) explains that schools should focus more on social distancing when the lockdown is lifted.

4 May 2020

55. [School closures do not have a significant effect on Covid-19 spread](#)

The evidence to support the closure of schools to combat Covid-19 is "very weak" and school closures are likely to have minimal impact on the spread of the virus, finds a new study led by Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health).

15 April 2020

56. [School closures do not have a significant effect on Covid-19 spread](#)

The evidence to support the closure of schools to combat Covid-19 is "very weak" and school closures are likely to have minimal impact on the spread of the virus,

finds a new study led by Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health).  
7 April 2020

57. [Children face little risk from Covid-19 coronavirus](#)

“What we know about the novel coronaviruses, including COVID-19, is children are at very little risk of infection,” explains Professor Russell Viner (UCL GOS Institute of Child Health).

20 March 2020

**June 2021**

[End the 'madness' of isolating children, Government warned](#)

*The Telegraph – Quotes Russell Viner*

**January 2021**

[Patients face having 'vital operations cancelled' as London hospitals fill with Covid patients](#)

*The Evening Standard – Quotes Russell Viner*

**December 2020**

[Boris Johnson to move 'heaven and earth' to roll out vaccine and ease tough new restrictions](#)

*Telegraph – Quotes Russell Viner in Live updates*

**October 2020**

[Covid cases among secondary school-aged children rise in England](#)

*The Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner*

['Scarred for life': Sage experts warn of impact of Covid policies on the young](#)

*The Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Parents should be more worried about their child catching MEASLES than coronavirus, top doctor warns](#)

*Daily Mail – Quotes Russell Viner*

**September 2020**

[Children shouldn't hug or kiss their grandparents when they come back from school](#)

*Liverpool Echo – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Children spread the coronavirus 'six times less than adults', finds study of Spanish summer camps where 30 infected under-18s passed Covid-19 on to just 12 others](#)

*Daily Mail – Quotes Russell Viner*

**August 2020**

[Coronavirus: 'Very low' risks to children mean school reopenings are safe, expert says](#)

*Independent – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Should children in England wear face masks in schools?](#)

*Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Pupils and teachers told to walk to school in bid to halt second wave of coronavirus](#)

*Evening Standard – Quotes Russell Viner (Via interview on BBC Radio 4's Today programme)*

[Opening schools in UK without more testing risks covid-19 second wave](#)

*New Scientist – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Coronavirus: Children's role in spread puzzles scientists](#)

*BBC – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Little evidence Covid spreads in schools, says Gavin Williamson](#)

*The Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Is this the way England is heading? Scottish schools are linked to more than 75 Covid cases less than two weeks after reopening as classrooms are forced to shut to control outbreaks](#)

*Daily Mail – Quotes Russell Viner*



[Fury as union chiefs insist 'science is still not clear enough' on the safety of children returning to school in England in September - but what DO studies say about how Covid-19 is spread by young people and how the disease affects them?](#)

Daily Mail – Quotes Russel Viner

[KID RISK Kids are more at risk of getting measles than coronavirus, says Britain's top child doctor](#)

The Sun – Quotes Russell Viner

**July 2020**

[Five children have died of coronavirus in UK, study reveals](#)

Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner

[Coronavirus-related illness is 'twice as common in children of African heritage'](#)

The Mirror – Quotes Russell Viner

[Third of UK paediatricians report seeing delayed presentations](#)

Medscape – Quotes Russell Viner

[BACK TO SCHOOL Kids have 'near zero risk' of getting Covid at school as 11 have died from virus, study finds](#)

The Sun – Quotes Russell Viner

**May 2020**

[Up to 100 children in UK affected by Kawasaki-like disease linked to coronavirus](#)

Metro – Quotes Russell Viner (Via interview on BBC Radio 4's Today programme)

[Baby dies of coronavirus-related Kawasaki disease two hours after this adorable photo](#)

Mirror – Mentions Russell Viner

PIMS-T

[Devon family launches fundraising appeal after eight-month-old baby dies of rare illness linked to Covid-19](#)

ITV News – Quotes Russell Viner

[Coronavirus warning after boy, 14, dies of rare illness linked to killer bug](#)

Daily Star – Quotes Russell Viner (Via interview on BBC Radio 4's Today programme)

[Coronavirus in children: What are the symptoms of new inflammatory disease that parents should look out for?](#)

Independent – Quotes Russell Viner

[Children could be at risk of suffering heart attacks and aneurysms if Kawasaki disease is misdiagnosed as coronavirus, top medics fear](#)

Daily Mail – Quotes Russell Viner

[Mum claims girl, 3, had 'terrifying' Kawasaki disease linked to coronavirus a year ago](#)

The Mirror – Quotes Russell Viner

[Europe learning the dangers of going back to school after coronavirus](#)

Politico – Quotes Russell Viner

**April 2020**

[Coronavirus: Plea for public to get medical care when they need it](#)

BBC – Quotes Russell Viner

[Coronavirus: scientists caution against reopening schools](#)

The Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner

[PARENTAL WARNING NHS outlines exactly when parents should go to A&E with kids during coronavirus epidemic](#)

*The Sun – Quotes Russell Viner*

[Children could be up to 20 times more likely to catch Covid-19 at home than they are at school, research claims](#)

*The Mail – Quotes Russell Viner (Via interview on BBC radio 4's Today programme)*

[Should parents be worried by warning about Covid-19 in children?](#)

*Channel 4 Fact Check – Quotes Russell Viner*

**March 2020**

[No elevated risk of coronavirus in pregnancy, experts say](#)

*Guardian – Quotes Russell Viner*