

Sydney students see vaccine as pathway back to normal

Janelle Chand, 17, another south-western Sydney student, said the majority of her school mates were against the vaccine.

“Others don’t have much of an opinion,” she said.

“My close friends aren’t going to get the vaccine. Instead they’re going to follow the COVID-safe guidelines.

“I have decided to take the vaccine because, weighing over the positives over the negatives of the vaccines, I realised that it was a smarter decision.”

Year 12 students such as Janelle and Neha will be given the Pfizer vaccine, which has not been clouded by the extremely rare but occasionally fatal blood clotting disorder linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Pfizer has been recommended by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in over-16s.

Tutor Nhi Chang said the timing of Sydney’s latest lockdown could not have been worse, but the vaccine rollout would help get students and educators back to face-to-face learning.

“Parents that are already vaccinated are really concerned about their children and really want them vaccinated as soon as possible,” Ms Chang said.

She wanted more support from the state government for tutors during the pandemic, saying it would help boost long-term academic results.

University of Melbourne epidemiologist Tony Blakely said Sydney’s latest outbreak would have seen lower case numbers if 20- to 40-year-olds had been vaccinated earlier.

“[They’re] more likely to be essential workers,” Professor Blakely said.

But he said the “arbiter of success” was reduced hospitalisations and deaths, which was why elderly Australians had been vaccinated.

“Maybe we might have done things differently if we’d known how infectious the virus was going to get a year ago.”

