



December 2021

Dear Families,

As the holidays approach, we wish all our families a safe and healthy holiday season. We know that COVID-19 delta and omicron variants may be on your mind and we want to make it clear that the health and safety of our children, families, and school staff is our highest priority. Vaccination is our best tool in maintaining safer schools and defending against COVID-19. If you have a child who is at least 5 years old and not yet vaccinated, we strongly encourage you to get them vaccinated as soon as possible with the Pfizer vaccine (the only vaccine authorized for children age 5-17).

As a reminder, if your child is fully vaccinated, they do not need to quarantine and miss school if exposed to a person with COVID-19. As long as your child is fully vaccinated (meaning that it has been at least 2 weeks since the second COVID-19 vaccine dose) and does not have COVID-19 symptoms, they can attend in-person school after being exposed. Also, students age 5 and older participating in high-risk extracurricular sports and other high-risk extracurricular activities (such as singing and band) **must be vaccinated to participate** in those activities during the 2021-22 school year.

In addition, we strongly recommend that all children receive the annual flu vaccine. The flu and COVID-19 are expected to circulate at the same time this season. Getting a flu vaccine reduces the chance of serious illness and hospitalization due to the flu and has been shown to save children's lives. Getting both vaccines is important, because the flu vaccine does not protect against COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine does not protect against flu. Your child can receive the flu vaccine at the same time as all other vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine. Check with your child's health care provider to schedule a vaccination appointment or you can find vaccine sites for both flu and COVID-19 vaccines at nyc.gov/vaccinefinder.

Once your child is vaccinated against COVID-19, you can upload an image of your child's vaccination card or NYC Excelsior Pass to the Department of Education's vaccine portal at vaccine.schools.nyc using your child's Department of Education account information. Submitting that information will let us know that your child does not have to quarantine if they become a close contact to a person with COVID-19.

You can find more information about the vaccine and other health and safety practices in our schools at schools.nyc.gov/2021health.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccines, including vaccine sites, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccine.

We wish you and your family a very happy and safe holiday season.

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