



150 YEARS
OF ADVANCING
PUBLIC
HEALTH



Fall 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In the coming weeks, we expect the FDA and CDC to recommend COVID-19 vaccinations for children ages 5 to 11 years old. We'd like to provide you with current information and resources on vaccination and, when vaccination is approved for this younger age group, **we encourage you to have your child vaccinated** to protect themselves, your family, and the school community.

While COVID-19 is generally less serious for school-age children than for older adults, children can become infected, and some may get very sick or suffer serious complications. Children can spread COVID-19 to others. Fortunately, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for individuals ages 12 and up and is currently under review for recommendation for children ages 5 to 11. The COVID-19 vaccine has been shown to be safe and effective against infection, serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Over 70 percent of Massachusetts youth ages 12-17 have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Getting your child vaccinated will help limit COVID-19 spread in our school and community, and it can help keep your child and their schoolmates in school.

Please speak to your child's doctor about their plans to administer the vaccine once it is made available and raise any questions or concerns you have about the vaccine and your child.

There are also hundreds of vaccination sites across the state that have indicated their willingness to vaccinate children 5 to 11. Many accept walk-in appointments, including CVS and Walgreens pharmacies, Market Basket and other grocery chains, and community health centers. More information on these sites, as well as safety information and helpful questions and answers, are all available at www.mass.gov/covidvaccine.

As a reminder:

- **The COVID vaccine is free for all, and no ID or insurance is needed to be vaccinated;**
- **You can get vaccinated even if you are undocumented. Getting a vaccine will not impact your or your family's immigration status.** The Public Charge rule does NOT apply to getting the vaccine.

Getting your family vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones. We appreciate your help to keep all of our students, faculty, staff, and volunteers, as well as our community, safe and healthy this fall and all year long.



Margaret R. Cooke
Acting Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Public Health



Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary
Education