



California School
Employees Association
#301



PAUSD Staff and School Community Members:

On October 1, 2021, Governor Newsom announced changes to school vaccination requirements. PAUSD, employee associations, and Palo Alto PTA Council have discussed these changes and we felt it was important to provide you with a joint update.

On behalf of PAUSD, the Palo Alto Management Association (PAMA), the Palo Alto Educators Association (PAEA), California School Employees Association #301 (CSEA), and PTA Council, please review the most recent updates outlined below. We are all in agreement that there are many questions and issues that may need additional clarification. Additional updates will be shared as information becomes available.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these changes and continue to prioritize the health and safety of our students, staff, and community.

School Vaccine Requirement

- Governor Gavin Newsom is directing the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to add the COVID-19 vaccine to other vaccinations required for in-person school attendance—such as measles, mumps, and rubella—pursuant to the Health and Safety Code sections 120325 - 120380.
- This will be accomplished by regulations promulgated pursuant to section 120335(b)(11), which authorizes vaccine requirements for “any other disease deemed appropriate” by CDPH. This is also consistent with the overall intent of the law to achieve “eventual achievement of total immunization” against dangerous childhood diseases. (HSC section 120325(a)).
- COVID-19 vaccine requirements will apply to all “pupil[s] of any private or public elementary or secondary school[s].” (HSC section 120335(b)).
- COVID-19 vaccine requirements will be phased in by grade span, grades K-6 and 7-12. This will also promote smoother implementation.
- This mandate will be a condition of in-person attendance. (HSC section 120335(f)). A student who is not vaccinated may remain enrolled in independent study, but may not attend in-person instruction.
- Requirements established by regulation, not legislation, must be subject to exemptions “for both medical reasons and personal beliefs.” (HSC section 120338).
- The Governor has also directed that adults be held to at least the same standards as students for the COVID-19 vaccine. While currently, California requires all K-12 staff to verify their vaccination status or be tested weekly (verify or test), all staff will be required to be vaccinated no later than when the requirement takes effect for students. The current verify-or-test requirement for staff will be converted to a vaccine mandate no later than when the first phase of the student requirement becomes effective.*

- While individual counties and schools may accelerate vaccine requirements, the state requirement will create a statewide standard to ensure that all staff and students will be vaccinated.

Timing

- Students will be required to be vaccinated for in-person learning starting the term following Food and Drug Administration (FDA) full approval of the vaccine for their grade span (7-12 and k-6).
- Upon full approval by the FDA of a vaccine for age groups within a grade span, CDPH will consider relevant recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians prior to implementing a requirement, as required by the Health and Safety Code section 120335(b)(11).
- CDPH will then initiate the rulemaking process, which includes public comment. Regulations promulgated pursuant to that process will also address many of the details of the requirement, including the scope of exemptions, etc.
- The regulations will take effect at the start of the following term, meaning either January 1st or July 1st, whichever comes first. (Education Code 37200). This will also give both parents and schools sufficient time to prepare and implement.
- Based on current projections for full FDA COVID-19 vaccine approval for children ages 12 and older, it is anticipated the vaccine mandate requirement would apply to students in grades 7-12 starting on July 1, 2022.
- Students who are under the age of full approval, but within the grade span, will be required to be vaccinated once they reach the age of full approval, regardless of grade. Students will have a reasonable period of time to receive the vaccine if they are being vaccinated with the two dose COVID-19 vaccine. This is consistent with existing procedures for other mandated childhood vaccines.

Sincerely,

Palo Alto Unified School District
Palo Alto Management Association
Palo Alto Educators Association
California School Employees Association #301
Palo Alto Council of PTAs

* <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/08/11/california-implements-first-in-the-nation-measure-to-encourage-teachers-and-school-staff-to-get-vaccinated/>