



Superintendent's UPDATE

Thursday, October 14

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Hello San Mateo County Education and Child Care Community,

After a short hiatus, the vaccination update is back! Since vaccinations are once again top of mind for schools and families, we wanted to make sure you had information to share with your communities. Look for the County Superintendent's Vaccination Update every Thursday to keep up with the latest regarding COVID-19 safety and schools, especially opportunities for our younger set to receive both their COVID-19 vaccination and 2021 flu shot.

Thank You School Administrators for Our Safe Schools

Before we move into vaccinations, let's take a moment during Week of the School Administrator to acknowledge and thank our many school site leaders who have courageously and tirelessly led our county's schools and districts during the most challenging time the United States has experienced in modern history. Due to their dedication and effective implementation of layered safety measures, our schools are safe places for students to learn and staff to work. The data from San Mateo County Health continues to verify schools are doing a great job mitigating COVID-19 impacts on campus. This is in large measure the result of amazing leadership at the school sites and district offices. Thank you all!

Boosters for School Staff

All school staff who are fully vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine are now eligible for Pfizer booster shots. Unlike the first time around, booster shots are widely available. Contact your healthcare provider, local pharmacy, or check San Mateo County Health's [website](#) for locations and times of their clinics.

The Food and Drug Administration is convening a panel of independent advisers who will recommend whether extra doses of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines should be administered and, if so, who should get them and when. The panel voted today to recommend a half-dose of the Moderna vaccine for people 65 and older and younger adults who may be at high risk because of their medical condition or job. Action on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is expected tomorrow. [Read more here](#). A final decision is not expected for at least another week.

Vaccines for Children Ages 5-11

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is also expected to move quickly on a request to approve the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11. The FDA has tentatively scheduled a meeting on October 26 to consider Pfizer's request. An FDA ruling is expected as early as Halloween. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will complete their review shortly thereafter. The CDC's recommendations are typically the federal government's last word on vaccine policy.

According to [Stanford University](#), the data from clinical trials of the vaccine with children appears to be promising. Two smaller doses of the vaccine (each one-third the amount of the adult dose) given to children three weeks apart elicited a robust immune response comparable to that seen in adults in vaccine trials.

San Mateo County Health and San Mateo County Office of Education are working together to ensure equitable access to vaccination opportunities. The preferred option is to contact a child's pediatrician. However, other options will be available, including healthcare provider-organized clinics and vaccinations through pharmacies, Stanford, Safeway, schools, and community centers. Information on these options will be made available shortly.

Vaccinations for Youth Ages 12-15

Schools and healthcare providers continue to encourage and support vaccinations for youth ages 12-15. Currently, the vaccination rate for youth in this age group in San Mateo County is 78 percent. This is lower than the number previously reported. For a list of vaccination options, including clinics just for youth, please visit the [San Mateo County Health website](#).

Vaccination Mandates

Earlier this month, Governor Newsom [announced](#) that vaccines will be required for in-person school attendance, likely beginning fall of 2022 for students in grades 7-12. COVID-19 would be added to the list of required vaccinations for students, including measles, mumps, and rubella. The Governor also encouraged local health jurisdictions and local education agencies to implement vaccination requirements ahead of a statewide requirement based on their local circumstances.

COVID-Safe Halloween and Fall Activities

With Halloween around the corner, it is a good time to provide our communities with important reminders about staying safe during celebrations. To assist with this, the San Mateo County Office of Education and the Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities, in consultation with San Mateo County Health, have prepared [Recommendations for COVID-Safe Fall Activities](#). Based on California Department of Public Health and CDC guidance, the document includes some basic safety steps schools and families can take to ensure that fall activities and events are not just fun but also safe for all members of the community, including young children who are not vaccinated.

COVID-Safe Schools and Vaccinations for Youth Webinar

Join San Mateo County Health and the San Mateo County Office of Education for an informative

webinar addressing the status of COVID-19 in our schools, measures in place to protect students and staff, and an update on vaccinations for youth ages 5-11, including what the research is showing about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine and options for vaccination. The webinar will be held on Wednesday, October 27th, from 6:30-7:45 p.m. Details and registration for the free webinar can be [found here](#). The webinar will be in English with Spanish interpretation.

That's a lot of news for one day, but it all points in the right direction – more students vaccinated and ever-improving conditions at school for in-person learning. Let's hope that this news reflects the real light at the end of the tunnel. It's up to us to get there.



Nancy Magee

San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools