



Superintendent's UPDATE

Thursday, December 9, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Dear San Mateo County Education and Child Care Community,

It's been two weeks since Thanksgiving and, as expected, we have seen an increase in cases of COVID-19 both across the county and in our schools. The number of cases this past week is roughly double from where we were in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. While these trends may feel unsettling, it may be some comfort to recognize that we are in a much better place than we found ourselves one year ago during the 2020 holiday season. More specifically, in our current reality, the overall number of cases is much lower than in 2020, are not resulting in as much severe illness, and hospitalizations and ICU visits are comparatively low. The key reason for this change is the availability of effective vaccines and increasing rates of vaccination in San Mateo County.

Vaccinations for Youth Ages 5-11

The County Office of Education, San Mateo County Health, school districts, and other partners continue to organize and facilitate vaccinations for our county's students, families, school staff, and child care providers. Last week we reported that 35.9 percent of children ages 5-11 had received a first dose of vaccine. This week, that number is 39.6 percent, with 18.2 percent having received two doses. In addition, 82.5 percent of youth ages 12-15 have received two doses of vaccine.

Families have a variety of options for vaccinating their children. These include several school-based clinics over the next month. Many of these events are open to all children ages 5-11, including these clinics next week at Daly City and East Palo Alto public schools:

Monday, December 13th, Bayshore Elementary School, 155 Oriente Street, Daly City. Please [share the flyer](#) (in English and Spanish) with your communities.

Tuesday, December 14th, Costaño School, 2695 Fordham Avenue, East Palo Alto. Walk-ins are welcome, more information (in English and Spanish) [is here](#).

Wednesday, December 15th, Los Robles-Ronald McNair School, 2031 Pulgas Avenue, East Palo Alto. Walk-ins are welcome, more information (in English and Spanish) [is here](#).

Vaccination clinics are also scheduled for a variety of locations throughout the county, including the San Mateo County Event Center. Information on these clinics can be found on the [SMCH webpage](#) and the [MyTurn website](#). [Stanford Health](#) and [Kaiser](#), as well as many pharmacies and community centers in the county, also provide vaccinations for this age group as well as older youth and adults.

A Big Thank You to San Mateo County School Nurses!

School nurses have always been an important part of our school communities, and it's hard to imagine where we would have been without them during the pandemic. We have been able to schedule many of the school-based vaccination clinics because the nurses have stepped up to provide the vaccinations both in their own communities and in districts across the county. Thank you, SMC school nurses!

Boosters for Youth Ages 16-17

The news today is that the CDC approved COVID-19 booster shots for youth ages 16-17, effective immediately. CDC Director [Dr. Rochelle Walensky said](#), "We know that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and I strongly encourage adolescents ages 16 and 17 to get their booster" if it has been at least six months since their last dose of vaccine.

Testing

One reason schools have been able to identify more COVID-19 cases is they are doing more testing. Many schools increased their testing cadence after Thanksgiving and will carry on that routine several weeks after the return from winter holiday break.

I Don't Like Needles

Now that the COVID vaccine has been approved for youth ages 5-11, some children are experiencing vaccine anxiety. Join the [Peninsula Health Care District](#) for a (virtual) Town Hall with health care professionals from Stanford Children's Hospital and Stanford University School of Medicine to learn more about positive approaches for families in supporting children through their fears. This free event will be in English and Spanish. More information and registration [can be found here](#).

Recommendations for COVID-Safe Winter Holiday Activities

The County Office of Education updated its holiday recommendations flyer, which reinforces key messages, such as get vaccinated, stay home when you don't feel well, wear a mask, and keep gatherings small. You can find the guidance on the SMCOE website in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Thank you for your care and attention to our children. When our children thrive, our community thrives.

Be well,



Nancy Magee
San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools

Please note: A copy of this letter in Spanish will be [posted here](#) shortly.