



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education



April 29, 2021

To Rhode Island Students and Families/Guardians:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), we are very pleased to share a new opportunity for eligible students and school communities to get vaccinated for COVID-19. We are collaborating with school systems and municipal partners to hold **local vaccination events for students 16 and older, and their families, in most cities and towns starting this week:**

- Doses of COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine, which is approved for people ages 16 and older, have been prioritized for these events;
- Each local event is being set up by municipalities and schools to best serve each community and they will share the details when the plans are ready;
- **Please sign up as soon as possible at your school site;** and
- If you cannot make your local school event, please register for another appointment at **www.vaccinateri.org**.

Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect students both in school and out. Most children and youth who get COVID-19 do not become seriously sick or need to be in the hospital but a small number of children and youth have experienced severe illness either during or after COVID-19 infection.

In Rhode Island, schools remain one of the safest places for students, teachers, and school staff to with regard to COVID-19 exposure. Only **5.2% of Pre K-12 cases in Rhode Island have been reported as due to possible school-based exposures:** since last September, 494 out of 9,450 of the Pre K-12 students and staff diagnosed with COVID-19 had exposure to COVID-19 in school or a school-related activity as their only possible exposure.

However, over the past month, there has been an **increase in COVID-19 cases among school-aged children throughout the country.** This increase in cases may be linked to a couple of factors. In Rhode Island, new variants of COVID-19 are present and most young people are not yet vaccinated. At the same time, people are resuming more social behaviors and recreational activities at school and in their communities.

When outside of school, you should **wear a mask** and **keep your distance near anyone you don't live with**. Wash your hands often, especially before eating or drinking. And, you should **get tested if you have any symptom of COVID-19**. Even if symptoms are mild or seem like seasonal allergies, you should get tested to be sure. People can have COVID-19 and not have any symptoms, so we also encourage you to **participate in asymptomatic COVID-19 testing offered at your school**.

We urge you to take this opportunity to get vaccinated and take another big step forward to protect yourself, your family, and communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Alexander-Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nicole" being the most prominent.

Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH
Director of Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "a. Infante-Green". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "a." being the most prominent.

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner of Education