

MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

PURPOSE

At The Sterling Hall School (the “School”) we are committed to providing and maintaining a safe school environment for all. Consistent with this commitment, the School has established this COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (the “Policy”) for Students for the 2022/2023 school year. The Policy requires that, in accordance with the terms set forth below, all Eligible Students (as defined in “Scope” below), be vaccinated for COVID-19 or obtain an approved exemption.

The School has established this Policy, considering reliable scientific evidence, government guidance, protocols, and requirements, and relevant human rights legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving public health issue in Canada. The School is monitoring guidance from all applicable public health authorities and reserves the right to revise this Policy as determined to be necessary or appropriate. It is recommended that students and their parents/guardians consult with their paediatrician or healthcare provider regarding COVID-19 vaccination.

BACKGROUND

The objective underlying this Policy is to provide a healthy and safe school environment for students, teachers and staff, and safeguard the broader communities in which they live.

The COVID-19 Science Advisory Table reports that as of January 9, 2022, 96.2 percent of the new cases in the province are the Omicron variant. It stated that the Omicron variant is far more transmissible than other variants of COVID-19, including the Alpha and Delta variants. The Science Advisory Table stated that the spread of the Omicron variant will likely drive COVID-19 cases above current projections. Medical experts warn that unvaccinated populations remain most vulnerable.

Dr. Kieran Moore, the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, has confirmed that vaccines provide the best protection against COVID-19. He stated that keeping youth in school to the fullest extent possible is critical to their learning, development and well-being. He confirmed that the protection of students in schools from COVID-19 disease enhances the protection of other community members by reducing the risk of disease transmission during an outbreak.

Health Canada has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine for individuals aged 12 and older.

On November 19, 2021, Health Canada approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for administration to children aged five to 11. The vaccine will require two doses of 10 micrograms for children aged five to 11, one third of the dose for adults. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is recommending the two doses be spaced eight weeks apart. Data from Pfizer-BioNTech shows that its COVID-19 vaccine is 91 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 in five to 11-year olds.

As a school, we have a heightened responsibility to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect our students, staff, their families and the surrounding community. Due to the fact that the unique nature of in-person learning involves close contact with other students and staff members, the vaccination of all students is strongly recommended, with certain exemptions, as set out in the Policy.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all students attending in-person at the School during the 2022/2023 school year and who are eligible to receive a COVID-19 Vaccination (“Eligible Students”).

TIMING

All Eligible Students will be required to be fully-vaccinated by August 2, 2022. “Fully vaccinated” currently means two doses of a Health Canada approved vaccine and a 14 day waiting period. If required, assistance will be provided by School staff with booking an Eligible Student’s vaccination.

The School strongly recommends that, when eligible, all Eligible Students receive their third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. In light of changing public health circumstances, the third dose of a Health Canada approved vaccine will become mandatory for all Eligible Students in future, when the Ontario government updates its definition of “fully vaccinated” to require a third dose of a Health Canada approved vaccine for the relevant age groups. At that time, the definition of “fully vaccinated” within the meaning of this policy will be updated to require the third dose of a Health Canada approved vaccine.

It is the responsibility of families of Eligible Students to proactively ensure that Eligible Students receive their third dose of a Health Canada approved vaccine once eligible, in anticipation of this update.

Additional doses of the vaccine may become mandatory for all Eligible Students in future, in accordance with the recommendations of public health in response to changing public health circumstances.

PROOF OF VACCINE

Eligible Students must produce proof of vaccination by August 2, 2022. Proof can be in the form of a copy of the proof of vaccination given at the time of receiving vaccination, or a letter from a medical practitioner, confirming the student has been vaccinated. The School will recognize proof of vaccination from a student’s home country, or another country where the student received their vaccination.

The School will only collect, use and disclose information regarding a student’s vaccination status in accordance with its Privacy Policy and all applicable privacy laws. Proof of vaccination will be kept in a confidential file, stored in a secure location.

EXEMPTION

The School recognizes its duties and responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”). If a student is unable to be vaccinated, due to a disability or medical condition as defined by the Code, the School has a duty to accommodate to a point of undue hardship.

However, this duty to accommodate must be balanced against the School's obligations to protect the health and safety of students and staff. Due to the serious health threat COVID-19 presents to members of the community, if an Eligible Student will not be vaccinated, their parent/guardian must provide the School with an appropriate medical exemption.

Medical Exemption

A parent/guardian who is requesting an exemption from this Policy on the basis of a medical reason is required to provide the School with a letter supplied by a physician or registered nurse in the extended class that sets out a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and the effective time period for the medical reason.

This letter must be provided to the School prior to June 1, 2022. If a student commences enrolment in the School after September 1, 2022, this letter must be provided to the School prior to the first day of school.

Process to Receive an Accommodation

1. The parent/guardian of the student who seeks an accommodation, including an exemption, is required to complete a COVID-19 Vaccination Accommodation/Exemption Request Form.
2. The parent/guardian of the student must provide the completed Accommodation/Exemption Request Form to the School's Principal or designate, with supporting documentation.
3. The School's Principal will consult with other appropriate school personnel and Toronto Public Health to determine whether an accommodation, up to and including an exemption, will be granted. If additional information is required from the student, the School's Principal or designate will follow up.
4. The School's Principal or designate will confirm receipt of the Accommodation/Exemption Request Form. An original copy of the Form will be securely stored at the School.

The accommodation process is a shared responsibility. All parties should cooperatively engage in the process, share information and consider potential accommodation solutions. Parents/Guardians of students who are requesting an accommodation are required to:

- Make the accommodation needs known to the best of their ability, preferably in writing, in a timely manner;
- Answer reasonable questions or provide information about relevant restrictions or limitations, including information from health care professionals;
- Take part in discussions about possible accommodation solutions;
- Co-operate with any experts whose assistance is required to manage the accommodation process;
- Meet agreed-upon performance standards and requirements, once accommodation is provided; and
- Work with school administration on an ongoing basis to manage the accommodation process.

Depending on learning and teaching considerations, possible accommodations may include regular antigen testing and/or assignment to online learning.