

June 16, 2021

*A Message from the COVID Safety Team*

Dear staff,

Thank you for your patience and flexibility this past school year and please enjoy this final COVID safety update!

### COVID-19 Safety Protocols for the fall

Washington Department of Health released [K-12 COVID-19 Requirements for Summer 2021 and the 2021 – 2022 School Year](#). It is likely that these requirements will be adjusted and updated over the summer. For now, this is what we know:

#### What is staying the same?

- Masking policy
- Not attending work or school when symptomatic
- Regular cleaning of high touch surfaces and regular hand washing
- Ensuring good ventilation and indoor air quality with facilities team
- Timely response to confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools in collaboration with Whatcom County Health Department
- Working with local providers to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to students, staff, and families at school sites
- Working with Whatcom County Health Department

#### What is changing?

- School schedule will return to full in-person days. Physical distancing should be maintained at three feet in the classroom and six feet elsewhere to the greatest extent possible but should not inhibit our ability to offer regular full-time in person school.
- The student daily health screening or attestation will no longer be required per updated CDC and DOH guidance.
- Communication of confirmed cases will be less robust and mainly focused on affected individuals.

### Vaccination Progress

Currently, only the Pfizer vaccine is available for kids 12 and older. Pfizer-BioNTech is pursuing emergency use authorization for children 2 to 11 by early fall. Moderna has applied to the Food and Drug Administration for approval to expand the emergency use of their vaccine to adolescents aged 12 to 17. A decision has not yet been announced.

	<b>Whatcom County</b>	<b>Washington State</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Percent of total population initiating vaccination</b>	57.5%	53.6%	52.5%
<b>Percent of total population fully vaccinated</b>	50.7%	46.9%	43.7%
<b>Percent of population initiating vaccination (12+)</b>	66.0%	62.8%	61.4%
<b>Percent of population fully vaccinated (12+)</b>	58.1%	55.0%	51.5%

[WA DOH COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#) and [CDC Covid Data Tracker](#)

Resources for vaccine appointments:

- [Visit Whatcom County Health Department's COVID-19 Vaccine Information page](#) for a list of pop-up clinics and FAQs
- Use [Vaccine Locator](#) to find a list of near-by appointments
- [Make an appointment to visit your closest Rite Aid](#)
- At PeaceHealth you can [make an appointment or walk-up anytime their clinic is open](#)
- [PeaceHealth and Unity Care have Vaccine Options for Individuals with Special Needs](#)

## Mask Guidance for Schools During the Summer

As we [shared a few weeks ago](#), the Washington state Department of Labor and Industries released guidance, which says fully vaccinated employees do not have to wear a mask or socially distance at work. Employers are required to confirm workers are fully vaccinated before ending mask and social distance requirements.

The new guidance does not change masking rules for schools, however, after June 18 staff who are working in schools with no students around may:

1. confirm your vaccination status with human resources,
2. have your vaccination status verified, and
3. then you may choose not to wear a mask at work.

Staff must continue to wear masks around students.

If meeting on site with HR is not convenient for you, you may email a picture of the front and back of your vaccination card to: [bps.immunizationrecords@bellingshamschools.org](mailto:bps.immunizationrecords@bellingshamschools.org). When HR has received and logged your vaccination status, they will give you an "I got vaccinated" button OR sticker to put on your work badge lanyard.

## Reflections on the year

We want to take a moment to thank you for your perseverance and resilience during these past 16 months. We know this last school year was full of challenges, but we also hope there were moments of joy and silver linings and maybe even new learnings that we will take with us into the future. Every day is looking brighter and a bit closer to returning to a sense of normalcy.

We hope all staff take time this summer to relax and recharge. This past year has impacted all of us in different ways. It is ok to take time to reflect on what's happened and to celebrate how far we've come. We look forward to seeing everyone back in school this fall!