

Feb. 26, 2021

A Message from the COVID Safety Team

Dear staff,

As part of our ongoing work to keep you informed about COVID safety practices and protocols we will be sharing regular updates. Each update will include the latest information from local and regional agencies as well as stories and resources within our district.

Topics: Updated BPS ventilation information, vaccine updates, CDC school guidance, Whatcom county data, and notice of a local UK variant case

Bellingham Public Schools updates

Ventilation information was updated in the [Staff Handbook of COVID-19 Protocols and Guidance \(p.6\)](#). It is also available as a [handout](#).

Vaccine Update

We were notified about a COVID vaccine clinic this weekend for select staff who work in school districts in Whatcom County. Staff are eligible if they are 65 or older, are 50 or older and live in a multigenerational household, work in a COVID-19 isolation room (we call them “screening rooms”), are a custodian, or provide behavioral health services.

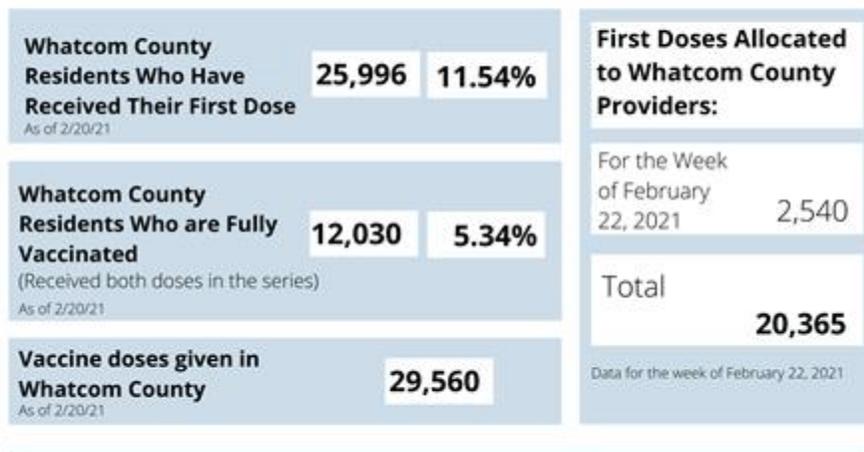
We have notified BPS staff based on eligibility and the number of vaccine doses available. We know there are more staff members who are eligible but have not yet been able to access the vaccine. We will continue to share general updates about the vaccine and notify eligible staff if/when we hear about clinics.

On Feb. 21, the COVID Safety Team sent out a vaccine FAQ. If you missed it, [read it here](#). The Whatcom County Health Department releases regular COVID-19 vaccine updates. On Feb. 23, the Health Department update included updated vaccine distribution numbers shown in the image below, and links to resources.

The Washington State Department of Health has updated the [Vaccine Locator](#) list to include information about available appointments from providers. The site provides a map of those locations accepting appointment, as well as ways to search by count, city, and vaccine type.

Whatcom County Vaccination Progress

Updated February 23, 2021



Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) update

On Feb. 12, the CDC released [school and child care program guidance](#). This included:

- [K-12 operational strategy](#),
- [implementation mitigation strategies](#) and [toolkit](#),
- [science briefs](#),
- and a lot more resources!

If you are looking for a deep dive into COVID-19 science, we suggest reading the [science briefs](#) and following the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports \(MMRW\)](#). Every week multiple studies are released that help our communities better understand COVID-19 in a variety of settings. This research helps to inform guidance and recommendations from our Washington State Department of Health and our local Whatcom County Health Department.

Whatcom County data and updates

- [Supporting Youth Mental Health During COVID-19](#)
- Below are the case rates for Whatcom County per 100,000 residents. Find the latest case data at [Whatcom County Health Department Data Dashboard](#) and check out the new [WA DOH Roadmap to Recovery](#) by region. Whatcom county is in the North region along with Skagit and Island counties.

Complete data	Feb 1 – Feb 14	267.2
Preliminary data	Feb 11 – Feb 24	218.4

- COVID testing access has expanded in Whatcom County! There is now testing seven days a week at the Bellingham Airport from 12 to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. Make an appointment through [Test Directly](#).
- Variant B.1.1.7, also known as the UK variant, has been found in Whatcom County. Guidance from the Health Department is to strictly adhere to protocols. That guidance may change if they see increased transmission as they monitor B.1.1.7 spread. Please read the Whatcom County Health Department [February 24 Newsflash](#) for more information.