

While COVID-19 has brought about changes, the crucial role vaccinations play in keeping children, their classmates, and communities safe remains unchanged. Since the start of the pandemic, many children in Virginia have been infected with COVID-19. Parents and guardians should be aware that the vaccination status of students impacts quarantine protocols and PCPS continues to encourage vaccinations in **all students who are eligible**.

Schools with lower rates of vaccination are more likely to see outbreaks which can lead to time away from school and sports in addition to more serious consequences for the health of children and families. [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has strongly expressed their support for approved COVID-19 vaccines in younger children and adolescents as “key, safe mechanisms that protect individuals and populations against many infectious diseases.”

As of May 12, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted emergency use authorization for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to be used in children ages 12-15, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends this vaccine for all youth 12 years and older. CDC’s recommendation comes after a strong endorsement from their independent Advisory Council on Immunization Practices.

Widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic and people who are fully vaccinated can resume activities that they did prior to the pandemic. Following CDC recommendations, individuals will quarantine when they might have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Students will be required to quarantine if they have been in close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, **unless they have been fully vaccinated**. ***People who are fully vaccinated do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms***. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don’t have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

We are providing a list of resources below on vaccine availability, safety, and other common questions.

### ***Where can my child receive a vaccine?***

- **Hospital or Primary Care Provider:** Many Virginia hospitals, primary care providers, and pediatrician offices are providing COVID-19 vaccines. You can reach out to your child’s primary care provider to see if they have appointments available.
- **Pharmacies:** There are over 1,000 pharmacies across the state administering COVID-19 vaccine. Families can search [Vaccines.gov](#) by the “Pfizer” filter to identify area pharmacies with available appointments providing vaccines approved for young people.
- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs):** FQHCs are community-based care providers that provide primary care services in underserved areas. You can [contact your local FQHC](#) to see if they have available appointments for your child. Services are offered on a sliding payment scale.

- **Local Health Department (LHD):** Your Local Health Department may host a vaccination event specifically for students and families. Check your Health Department's website for updates. <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/peninsula/>
- **Fast, Easy, Free, and Nearby COVID-19 Vaccination:** The federal government is providing the vaccine free of charge to all people living in the United States, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/no-cost.html>

***Where can I learn more about the COVID-19 Vaccine?***

- [The Science Behind COVID-19: Parent FAQs](#) (American Academy of Pediatrics)
- [Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#) (Center for Disease Control)
- The Virginia Department of Health [website](#), which provides information regarding COVID-19 [vaccines](#) for children and teens.

We appreciate you doing your part to keep our schools and community safe. We hope that the months ahead will be healthy ones, free of vaccine-preventable disease.