



Public Health
Santé publique
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

August 16, 2021

Dear parent/guardian/member of our school community:

Re: Back-to-school and COVID-19 vaccination

Let's get kids back to class safely by making it a two-dose summer!

Public Health Sudbury & Districts and area school boards are working together to remind you that it's not too late to roll up your sleeve and get vaccinated. Public Health recommends completing the two-dose series of COVID-19 vaccine by **August 24** to ensure students are fully vaccinated two weeks before back-to-school in September.

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective and will protect students, families, and the school community—promoting a safe in-person learning environment. As back-to-school approaches, now is the time to **get the COVID-19 vaccine** or **complete your vaccine series**.

Vaccination status will be an important consideration for Public Health in the management of cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools. The recently released [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#) outlines differences in case and contact management, including dismissals, isolation, and testing, depending on whether an individual has been fully vaccinated. Vaccination will help students stay in school, participate in extra curricular activities, and experience fewer disruptions at school, at home and with their families.

The benefits of COVID-19 vaccines continue to outweigh any potential risks, with proven reductions in deaths and hospitalizations due to COVID-19. When learners of all ages can gather safely, they can spend more time learning, problem solving, regulating emotions, and curiously exploring the world. Return to school means increased access to mental health supports from schools and teachers, enhanced social skill development with peers, and renewed opportunities to meet educational milestones.

While vaccination rates have reduced the number of new cases being reported locally, the virus still poses a threat and there are expectations of a fourth wave of COVID-19 in the fall. The **Delta variant** is the dominant virus strain circulating in Ontario, including Sudbury and districts. It is more transmissible

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and causes more serious disease. The vaccine is also less effective against this variant, requiring two doses for a protective immune response. Those who can be and are fully vaccinated protect those who cannot—such as younger students in schools who are not yet eligible for vaccine.

Over the next several weeks, stay current on Public Health's social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)) to spot **community champions**. Youth and adult champions will be featured during a back-to-school blitz to help increase vaccination rates for a safe return to school.

The best way to keep schools safe is to keep COVID-19 cases low in our community. Getting the vaccine is key to this and it is now easier to access than ever! **Anyone 12+** who needs a COVID-19 vaccine can book an appointment or show up at a walk-in, pop-up, or mobile [COVID-19 vaccine clinic](#).

Together, we can make back-to-school a great and long-lasting success. Don't delay, get vaccinated today!

Sincerely,

Dr. Penny Sutcliffe

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Sudbury & Districts

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