

Skamania School Parent Newsletter – Part II- Health & Safety Updates

August 27

Dear Skamania School Families,

I want to share important health and safety updates for the 2021-2022 school year.

First of all, we are fortunate to be able to open for full day in-person education for all students. This would not be possible without everyone working together to keep our students, families and staff safe.

Updated HVAC System

As part of our modernization project this summer, we were able to replace our HVAC unit and upgrade to the latest air quality filter to reduce the spread of germs throughout the building. We will also have much better air flow, ventilation and temperature control in the building.

Masks, Distancing and Testing

Facial masks will be required for all staff, students and visitors inside all school buildings and while on district transportation regardless of their vaccination status for the 2021-2022 school year. This is a statewide legal requirement in all education settings from the Washington State Department of Health to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Masks will not be required outside the building during recess and PE or inside during lunch.

Students will be distanced in their classrooms, with approximately 3 feet between students. We will use the multi-purpose room for lunch so that students may be socially distanced 6 feet apart since masks will be removed.

We will be working closely with OSPI, ESD112 and Skamania County Public Health to ensure access to timely testing for those with symptoms or who have been identified as close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If your child is experiencing symptoms or could be considered a close contact of someone who is sick, please refer to the [COVID-19 Student Symptom Flowchart](#) before sending them to school. The flowchart is posted to our website at the link above and it is attached if you'd like to have a copy available at home.

Vaccines

On August 18, Governor Inslee announced that all employees, contractors, and volunteers working in education settings are legally required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 by October 18, 2021. This aligns with the statewide vaccine requirement for all state employees and those in healthcare settings that was announced the week before. There will be a process for those with medical and religious exemptions.

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On August 23, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was granted full approval by the FDA for those age 16 and older. This means that the vaccine is currently available for students ages 12-15 under the FDA emergency use authorization, and with full FDA approval for those 16 and older. If you have questions about the vaccine, please consult your doctor or health care provider. They will be able to answer your questions, and provide you with their recommendation based on your own child's health situation.

I want to be clear that the vaccination requirement applies to staff and other adults working in our building: *students are NOT required to be vaccinated at this time*. Also, please note that documentation of vaccination or exemption status of employees is confidential and will not be shared.

As always, please contact the school office whenever you have questions or concerns regarding your child's educational experience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ralph Pruitt, Superintendent/Principal