

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: August 19, 2021**

As the school year begins this fall, students in New Jersey will be fully returning to in-person learning. To ensure that your child and all New Jersey students are protected against COVID-19 once schools open, here are a few steps you and your family can take in the weeks ahead.

**Get your child vaccinated:** Everyone 12 years-old and up is eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations. The FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19 and remain the leading way to protect your child, your family, and your community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all eligible students be vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccinations for 12 through 17-year-olds require 2 doses, so for the best possible protection against COVID-19 and the highly transmissible Delta variant, students should be scheduled for their first dose as early as possible.

**Get yourself and other household members vaccinated:** Students are best protected when those around them are also protected – especially if they are under the age of 12 and cannot be vaccinated themselves. To protect yourself and your child ahead of the first day of school, please get vaccinated as soon as possible and encourage others in your household and community to get vaccinated as well.

**Vaccines are free for all, immigration status will not be asked, and health insurance is not required.**

**Have those who are not vaccinated get tested for COVID-19:** If your child cannot be vaccinated (<12 years old) or is not vaccinated, we encourage you to have them tested for COVID-19 before the start of school. This will reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering schools and disrupting students' learning and, if done early enough, may allow for any period of isolation to be completed prior to the first day of school (if needed after a positive COVID-19 test result).

**Be sure to mask up:** When students, teachers, staff, and families correctly and consistently wear masks they protect themselves and others. This is especially important as of late, given the more transmissible Delta variant. All students, staff, and visitors in K–12 schools will be required to wear masks, regardless of vaccination status, for the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

Thank you for your help in supporting a safe return to school for our students in the fall!

### **To find a COVID-19 vaccination clinic near you:**

- Visit the [NJ COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment Finder](#)
- Call the **NJ Vaccine Call Center** at 855-568-0545
- Visit the [vaccine section](#) of NJ COVID-19 Information Hub

### **To find a free COVID-19 testing site near you:**

- Visit [COVID-19 Test Site Finder](#) on NJ COVID-19 Information Hub
- Visit [Castlight COVID-19 Test Site Finder](#)

**For additional information please visit the [NJ COVID-19 Information Hub](https://covid19.nj.gov) (covid19.nj.gov) or call 211 or 1-800-962-1253 with COVID-19 questions (available 24 hours / 7 days a week).**