



# *East Providence School Department*

145 TAUNTON AVENUE  
EAST PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02914-4505



Kathryn M. Crowley  
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Celeste Bowler, Asst. Supt.  
Dr. Sandra Forand, Asst. Supt.

August 9, 2021

To Our East Providence School Community,

Our School Year 2021 - 2022 is almost here. My letter today is to inform you of some of the changes that will be happening this year. Our biggest change, of course, will be to welcome all of our students and staff back to in-person learning! Please take a few moments to read the information in this letter.

The East Providence School District will continue to follow CDC and RIDOH guidance. This guidance has been evolving with changes occurring over the summer. Below is the most up to date information available as of today.

## Vaccinations for COVID-19:

The most important and effective means to protect our students, staff and community is to be fully vaccinated. Currently, there is no vaccine for children under 12 years old.

The vaccine helps protect us from the Delta variant which currently is responsible for the majority of new COVID-19 cases.

Vaccines are available to every Rhode Islander age 12 and older. There is no cost for the vaccine. To find a state vaccination site or to learn more about vaccines over the telephone, please call: 844-930-1779 Monday through Friday 8:30AM to 5:00PM, Saturday and Sunday 8:30AM to 4:30PM. To schedule an appointment online, go to [VaccinateRI.org](https://VaccinateRI.org) then click on Find a Vaccination Clinic.

To ensure the safest return to school possible, it is highly recommended that those 12 years old and older get vaccinated soon.

Our time frame for opening schools for 2021 - 2022 is fast approaching. To have fully vaccinated students and staff for our first day of school, vaccinate now. To be fully vaccinated requires 2 doses of vaccine which are given three weeks apart with an additional completion of a 14 day time period after the second dose.

Currently, Pfizer is the only vaccine approved for students 12 years old and older.

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 2 doses. Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine is one dose. All require a 14-day period after completion of dosage to be considered fully vaccinated.

If for any reason, you or your family cannot vaccinate in the near future, please, schedule an appointment for as soon as possible. It is a start, however, you are not fully covered by the vaccine until 2 doses and a 14-day period after the second dose is complete. We have been made aware that fully vaccinated people may still develop COVID-19. This is **not** usual, however, has occurred. These

cases have been milder than cases in unvaccinated people. The frequency of hospitalization is less and cases resulting in death are fewer. If you are not fully vaccinated, you should continue all precautions (mask wearing, social distancing, etc.) until you meet the requirements.

What you should continue to do if you are not fully vaccinated.

- You still need to follow guidance at your workplace and local businesses
- If you travel, take precautions to protect yourself and your family
- Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth is still required on planes, buses, trains and other public transportation
- Social distancing and frequent hand washing/hand sanitizing is important.

Fully vaccinated people should still self-monitor for symptoms, especially if you have been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms, be tested and stay home away from others. If your test is positive, isolate at home.

What the CDC knows:

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19

- Vaccines are effective against severe disease and death from variants currently circulating in the United States including the Delta variant
- Infections occur in only a small portion of fully vaccinated people, even with the Delta variant. When infections do occur in fully vaccinated people, they tend to be mild
- If you are fully vaccinated and become infected with COVID-19, you can spread the virus to others. Please seek medical advice/treatment and isolate.
- People with weakened immune systems including those who take immunosuppressive medications may not be protected even when fully vaccinated. You should discuss this with your healthcare provider.

Changes that will occur when we return to school:

1. **Masks:**  
Mask wearing is strongly recommended, however, not mandatory. For students who ride buses, masks are required while on the bus. This applies to fully vaccinated as well unvaccinated students and staff. Masks should be cleaned regularly.
2. **Social distancing:**  
Elementary school students will remain in their stable pods with 3 - 6 feet distancing between students when possible. Stable groups will be maintained in class as well as recess/outdoor play. In the cafeteria, students will remain with their stable pod and 6 feet distancing will be maintained. For students with food allergies, seating will safely be arranged while keeping the child within their stable pod.  
Middle School and High School students will maintain 3 feet socially distanced when possible. Dining will be in the cafeteria with assigned seating for Middle School. High school students will dine in the cafeteria and sit with the same group of students when possible.
3. **Hand washing and sanitizing:**  
Elementary schools will wash hands/use hand sanitizer prior to and after recess and cafeteria. Middle and High School students will frequently wash or sanitize their hands.  
All classrooms will have hand sanitizer available to all students. Hand washing opportunities will be available throughout the school day.

4. **Daily COVID Screening:**

School year 2021 - 2022, all parents will be required to complete a self-attestation form quarterly. By signing this form, parents are agreeing to screen their children for COVID symptoms every school day. They are also agreeing to keep their children home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. This form will be online.

No student should enter their school building if they are ill. All staff will complete a quarterly attestation form as well. It's completion is mandatory. As with students, all staff are under the same obligation to screen daily and to remain home if exhibiting symptoms. No staff should enter a school building if they are ill.

If a student is ill while at school, they will be sent to the Nurses' Office for an assessment. Parents will be called to dismiss their child. Parents will be advised that the student must be dismissed within one hour. Recommendations will be made by the School Nurse to include but not limited to COVID testing, calling/being seen by a healthcare professional and other recommendations as necessary. Ill students will remain in the Nurses' Office until dismissed.

5. **Contact Tracing, Quarantine and Isolation:**

Contact tracing will be done whenever a student or staff is identified as COVID positive. If a student or staff member is fully vaccinated, they are not required to quarantine. Instead, they are asked to monitor for COVID signs and symptoms and may attend school as usual unless they develop symptoms.

Unvaccinated, students and staff, who are close contacts, will be asked to quarantine. On day 5, a quarantining student or staff may have a COVID test.

If the test is negative, the close contact may return to school after completing 7 days of quarantine. They must self-assess for 3 days after day 7. If a COVID test is not done, quarantine is 10 days.

For all COVID-19 positive students and staff, isolation is 10 days.

All of the above information is subject to change if/when the status of COVID-19 changes.

Thank you,

Diane M. Wallace RN BSN  
Head Nurse - East Providence School District  
School Nurse Riverside Middle School  
[dwallace@epschoolsri.com](mailto:dwallace@epschoolsri.com)  
401-585-4186