

SPEED S.E.J.A. #802
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December 15, 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As you may know, the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has reached Cook County and will no doubt begin to spread. Children and young adults carry the virus at much higher rates than other groups, meaning even though they don't often get severely sick, they can bring the virus home and infect vulnerable family members who are at risk of severe disease.

We are writing to request that you get your child vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. Doing so will protect your child, your family, our school, and our community against severe illness from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccine has been extensively studied and is safe and effective for children 5 years and older. Pediatricians in our community are strongly encouraging that all children 5 years and older be vaccinated. They are available to parents and guardians for any questions or concerns.

Another critical tool in the pandemic is COVID-19 testing. It remains an important way to protect our schools. We encourage all children to participate in regular testing through our school. Our hope is that community-wide vaccination will eventually lead us out of this pandemic, but frequent testing to identify the virus and its spread can help guide public health strategies and tactics.

We encourage you to view trusted sources of information, such as:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/groups/families-children.html>);
- The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) website which has links to **webinars** and other resources (<https://illinoisAAP.org/family-immunization-resources/>);
- The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)'s website, which contains printable and downloadable informational resources, in several languages (<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/>)

Thank you so much for your support in keeping our school community safe! Only together will we emerge from this pandemic and we thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Tina Halliman', written over a white background.

Dr. Tina Halliman,
Superintendent