

# ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Office of the Superintendent  
Arlington High School  
P. O. Box 167  
869 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02476-0002

Telephone  
(781) 316-3500  
Fax  
(781) 316-3509

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Dear APS families,

As of August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the state has mandated that all public school students must have an influenza vaccine before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 in order to continue being in school after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Any student initially starting school after that point must also have proof of obtaining one. This is to mitigate illness during a year in which the COVID-19 pandemic is still active.

Please see the Massachusetts DPH announcement copied below. Your child's medical provider, local urgent care clinics, and numerous area pharmacies are or will be offering the vaccine and it should be covered by your insurance. Also, the Arlington Board of Health will be offering flu vaccines this fall. The manner in which the town will offer the vaccine will be announced soon by town officials and will be shared with families.

Please note that on rare occasions, people may have mild symptoms for up to a few days post-vaccination. It is advised that your child receive the vaccine at your earliest convenience. However, *if* your child feels ill after receiving the vaccine, please do not send them to school as this could mimic COVID-19 symptoms, which would warrant dismissal from school and you would have to get your child tested for COVID per guidelines.

<https://www.mass.gov/news/flu-vaccine-now-required-for-all-massachusetts-school-students-enrolled-in-child-care-pre?subject=Mandated%20flu%20vaccines%20in%20Massachusetts>

Please take this opportunity to ensure that your child is up-to-date on all of their vaccinations. These too are mandated by the state and are a requirement for school attendance of any nature *within 60 days of the start of school for this year only*, unless your child has a medical or religious exemption, is homeless, or is a refugee. *Please provide documentation of the received vaccine to your school nurse.* If you have signed a yearly religious exemption, then you will have to keep your child out of school for an allotted number of days if there is an outbreak of a disease in which your child has *not* been immunized against. Medical exemptions require a note from your medical provider stating the reason for immunization non-compliance and must be in accordance with Massachusetts state regulations. As always, feel free to reach out to your school nurse or me if you have any concerns regarding the new guidelines.

Lastly, the state has waived vision, hearing, SBIRT and BMI screenings in schools this year but these should still be done by your child's medical provider at their annual physical exam. The Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health has very recently disclosed new examination guidelines for school entry.

In Health,

Susan M. Franchi, DNP, FNP-C, RN  
Director of Nursing Service  
Arlington Public Schools  
[sfranchi@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:sfranchi@arlington.k12.ma.us)