

October 2021

Dear Parent / Legal Guardian / Student,

As the 2021-22 school year begins, we remain committed to the health, well-being and safety of students, educators, school staff and the broader community. Keeping our schools open this year is our collective priority.

Vaccines are safe, effective and the best way to protect yourself, your child, and your family from COVID-19. Vaccines help to stop the spread so we can safely and gradually resume more activities.

COVID-19 immunization for students is not mandatory. However, understanding the student immunization status and coverage within classes and schools will better enable public health units to respond if there is an outbreak.

Local public health units will be reviewing and assessing students' COVID-19 vaccination information together with class lists to support case, contact and outbreak management within schools. This is only applicable to students eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., those born in 2009 or earlier).

All information collected by the public health unit will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes described in this letter. Further, these immunization records are being disclosed to local public health units under Section 39(2)(a) of the *Personal Health Information and Privacy Act* (PHIPA) as a disclosure that is made for the purposes of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA).

Public health units may reach out to parents/legal guardians/students, as applicable, if they have questions about a student's immunization status. For example, they may have questions about a particular immunization record (e.g., dose timing), or information that is missing. They can also answer any questions you may have and provide information related to COVID-19 vaccines. It is important that this information is complete and accurate since it will inform public health units in the event of an outbreak.

Please see the attached COVID-19 Information Resources for Parents/Guardians and Youth and the COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs for Parents and Guardians for information about COVID-19 and vaccines.

Should you have questions on how to access COVID-19 vaccines for yourself, your child, or your family, please visit the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit webpage (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to keep our students safe.

Sincerely,

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