

August 20, 2021

Dear Families,

We are so excited to welcome New York City's students back to the classroom this fall! And back to the playing fields!

As part of our multilayered approach to health and safety in our schools, COVID-19 vaccination will be required this year for New York City Department of Education (DOE) students and staff participating in Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) sports considered high-risk for potential COVID-19 transmission. This is in alignment with recent New York State and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, which states that high-risk sports and extracurricular activities should be virtual or canceled in areas of high community transmission unless all participants are fully vaccinated.

High-risk sports include football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse, stunt, and rugby. Vaccination will also be required for participation in bowling, because while not a high-risk sport, it takes place in spaces that require vaccination.

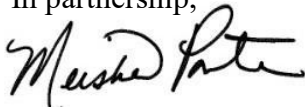
Participants in fall high-risk sports must get their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by the first day of competitive play, which varies by sport. Winter and spring PSAL participants have until the first day of competition to be fully vaccinated. For additional information about vaccine requirements for PSAL in the 2021-22 school year, please see the FAQ at the end of this letter.

Families will be able to upload proof of students' vaccination status at vaccine.schools.nyc beginning August 21. Proof of vaccination can be an image of a vaccination card, NYS Excelsior Pass, or other government record. Submitting this information will support New York City's pandemic response and recovery efforts, and help ensure that DOE schools and buildings remain safe places for all students and staff.

Getting the vaccine is safe, effective, and free—and the most important step that you can take to protect your family and community against COVID-19. If you have a child who is at least 12 years old, we strongly encourage you to make a vaccination appointment for them as soon as possible by visiting vaccinfinder.nyc.gov. You can also call 877-VAX-4-NYC (877-829-4692) for help making an appointment at a City-run vaccination site. Mobile vaccination sites will also be visiting schools and PSAL conditioning sites across the city this fall.

With the rapid spread of the delta variant of the virus, it has never been more important to get vaccinated. The delta variant is more contagious, infecting more young people than previous strains, and may be more likely to cause severe illness, and to reinfect someone who already had COVID-19. Keep New York City safe, keep New York City strong—get vaccinated!

In partnership,



Meisha Porter
New York City Schools Chancellor

FAQ Regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for PSAL Participation

How can student athletes provide proof of vaccination?

Families can upload proof of vaccination on the DOE's COVID-19 vaccination portal at vaccine.schools.nyc. Proof can be an image of a vaccination card, NYS Excelsior Pass, or other government record.

Who will be checking vaccination status?

Coaches and athletic directors will check vaccination cards or the vaccination portal to confirm status.

What are the consequences for not being vaccinated?

If a student participating in a high-risk PSAL sport this fall does not have their first dose by the first day of competitive play for their sport, they will not be allowed to participate in practice or competition.

Do student athletes who are fully vaccinated need to wear masks?

Fully vaccinated athletes are not required to wear a mask during PSAL activities held outdoors.

Does this apply to coaches and PSAL Athletic Directors?

Yes, this mandate applies to everyone participating in high-risk sports.

Can games or practices happen before participants are fully vaccinated?

Yes, as long as participants have received their first dose.

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