

# Stricter Guidelines on SPPS Schools

A mandate has been set on students requiring a vaccination, as of September 28, 2021

**BY HAFSA ALI**

**T**HE SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (SPPS) board of education is enforcing a vaccine mandate on children 12 years and older who are currently attending public schools this 2021-2022 school year in order to allow students for a safer return into in-person learning.

The new mandate is requiring parents with children in this age bracket to get their children vaccinated for COVID. All the students attending SPPS who get the vaccine must report to their school that they have been vaccinated so they don't face being excluded from classes. This is a part of their plan that involves bringing back students for safe in person learning. Many parents have voiced their opinions on this matter involving the vaccine mandate. "I don't believe that I should have my child vaccinated when I haven't even got vaccinated, I feel as if this is too early to get the vaccine, it might not even be credible." says Hamdi, a SPPS parent of two.

However, according to the CDC and current growing evidence, people who are vaccinated are less likely to have as severe of symptoms as someone who isn't vaccinated, and they are also less likely to transmit the disease to other people. Other research involving the Mayo Clinic states that:

**“**Research has shown that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is 100% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children ages 12 through 15.**”**

The COVID-19 vaccine has been able to provide a safer outcome to students who are in a much riskier situation, such as those who are immunocompromised. "The vaccine mandate is a good way to motivate parents to get their child vaccinated as well as get vaccinated themselves because I just want my children to be in a safe environment again," says Farhiya, another parent who has children who attend Central high school in St. Paul.

Some pre-existing COVID-19 prevention guidelines for students include wearing masks throughout the day regardless of their vaccination status, physical and social distancing, and frequent hand washing. The deadline for students to get vaccinated was October 17, 2021, and started to exclude students from school by the 27th. Many of the staff, like the teachers and social workers who interact with students daily, have been required to get the vaccine as well, the deadline for the staff took effect on October 15, 2021.

Much of what SPPS is currently doing to motivate students and parents to get vaccinated is opening health clinics within the schools. Students and staff can get vaccinated for free without worrying about health insurance. The SPPS board is also encouraging parents to test their children for COVID any time they get sick, there are many resources available for parents on the SPPS website on what to do and how to take care of their child if they test positive for the virus. These safety measures in place are exactly what SPPS believes will bring normalcy back into the classroom, so parents and students don't have to worry about remote learning or just the unfortunate situation COVID has brought to the communities across St. Paul.