

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON
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“Public Schools not only serve the public, they make the public.”

TO: Parents & Guardians
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: RSU 9 COVID Information Updates!
DATE: 11-8-2021

Pediatricians Share: What Parents Need to Know about the COVID-19 Vaccine for Children – As you no doubt have heard the CDC has recently recommended that 5- to 11-year-old children receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This offers a way for parents to better protect their children and families from the COVID-19 infection. Everyone has questions and the best way to get answers is through medical professionals. The Maine Community Action Partnership (MECAP) invites parents to join them ***TOMORROW*** for a forum featuring Maine pediatricians as they share information about children and the COVID-19 vaccine and give advice on what to consider when making the decision on whether or not to vaccinate your child(ren) against COVID-19. [There will be time for questions from the audience.](#)

The Speakers will include:

- Gretchen Pianka, MD, MPH, Pediatrician at Central Maine Pediatrics
- Jillian Gregory, DO, Pediatric Critical Care Physician at Maine Medical Center
- Sydney Sewall, MD, MPH, Pediatrician at Maine General Health
- Michael Ross, MD, Pediatrician at Northern Light Pediatric Primary Care

Moderator: Claire Berkowitz, President, Midcoast Maine Community Action

WHEN: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 from 6 pm--7:15pm EST

WHERE: Via Zoom, register at mecap.org/events to receive the webinar login information.

Vaccination Clinics are being planned – With case counts increasing around the State of Maine, especially among younger children/students, we want to do all we can to help parents who want their child(ren) to receive the FDA-approved vaccine. Receiving this vaccination is one way to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 along with reducing the need to quarantine when considered a close contact. RSU 9 will be hosting optional vaccine clinics through Franklin Community Health Network (FCHN) for students ages 5-11 at our schools. These clinics will be run in the same way the clinics for the older students were run in the Spring. We will be working closely with FCHN to set these up based on parents completing the COVID Vaccination Survey. If you are interested in having your child participate, please complete this [google form](#). Only students who have completed consent form (coming out shortly) will be able to participate in a COVID-19 vaccine clinic.

[Pool Testing is a SAFE and effective way](#) – To reduce the chance of your child having to quarantine away from school. Families can opt-in at any time. You can also opt-out once in. Should you wish to sign your child up to participate, please call your school and we will send home a consent form with your student. Thank you!

We need to do everything we can to avoid - What our neighboring district, RSU 73, had to do this past week. To me that means each and every chance that we have to catch any opportunity for COVID coming into our schools.

<https://www.sunjournal.com/2021/11/02/as-a-precaution-spruce-mountain-schools-move-to-remote-learning-until-nov-15/>

Winter Sports Health & Safety Expectations – Is the next item to be reviewed, discussed and finalized. We know how important extra-curricular activities are to our students and want them to be able to safely participate in athletics both inside and outside this winter. Our biggest concern for Winter Sports, with most being inside, is that the chance of COVID spread is greater inside than outside during physical activity and that means that the chance of students and staff needing to quarantine will increase. Therefore, we need to find the best way possible to reduce days of quarantine so that students do NOT lose class time and interactions with classmates and staff or have activities/games postponed or canceled. I am disappointed that we are still waiting for greater guidance from the Maine Principals’ Association and other state organizations currently.

We will be presenting a draft health plan for winter activities at tomorrow night’s RSU 9 School Board meeting. This will be for review only. We will then send out the draft to parents Wednesday morning. On Thursday, November 18th from 6:30 – 7:30 PM we will be hosting a ZOOM Mtg. to answer parent and student questions. The RSU 9 School Board will then take up this item for a final decision and vote at their meeting on Tuesday, Nov 23rd. More information to come.

Staff Vaccination Rates – Each month the Maine Dept. of Ed (MDOE) asks each school district to survey staff about their vaccination status. I have heard differing numbers for what the overall vaccination goal should be, but somewhere between 80-90% is where we would like to be. The following information for October has been reported to the MDOE for RSU 9. The numbers are collected through an anonymous survey. The state reports “unknowns” as not vaccinated when compiling the data for public release.

M/E Oct 2021	Totals	Yes	No	Unknown			Total %	% Y	% N
Itinerant	100	76	10	14	100	Itinerant	100.0%	76.0%	10.0%
AHS	25	20	3	2	25	AHS	100.0%	80.0%	12.0%
CBS	46	38	0	8	46	CBS	100.0%	82.6%	0.0%
CCHS	29	19	8	2	29	CCHS	100.0%	65.5%	27.6%
Cushing	16	14	0	2	16	Cushing	100.0%	87.5%	0.0%
FCTEC	25	18	5	2	25	FCTEC	100.0%	72.0%	20.0%
Mallett	57	40	11	6	57	Mallett	100.0%	70.2%	19.3%
MBHS	106	78	8	20	106	MBHS	100.0%	73.6%	7.5%
MBMS	68	57	5	6	68	MBMS	100.0%	83.8%	7.4%
TOTALS	472	360	50	62	472				
		76.3%	10.6%	13.1%					

In closing let me thank you for your patience and understanding as we do our best to work through the time of COVID, following the best medical and scientific advice and recommendations that the experts in our country have given us. We know that peoples’ patience is wearing thin and that we all want COVID 19 to become a bad memory. I am right there with YOU! Hopefully, even though there are “break-through” cases, now with more opportunities for people and students to get vaccinated we may truly be on the downside of this. I do understand that the “break-through” cases can cause some to wonder if all our efforts are worth it. Statistically speaking, if the three vaccines are around 88% successful overall and you have say 500,000 having received the vaccine it means that there could be 60,000 break-through cases with 440,000 protected. This is one of the reasons we need to continue to do all we can with our other expectations.

Thank you for taking the time to review the above!