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November 3, 2021

Dear Vermont parents and guardians:

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep your children, families and schools safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are like many Vermont families with school-age children, you may have experienced disruption or quarantine due to cases in your child's school. We fully understand how challenging this has been for everyone.

That is why the federal government's decision to approve the pediatric Pfizer vaccine is so important. **The best way to keep your family safe and healthy, and to keep students in school, is to make sure your child is vaccinated if they are age 5 or older.**

COVID-19 vaccines, including the new pediatric dose, work extremely well at preventing hospitalization and death due to the virus, including the Delta variant. Your child's risk of getting sick goes down dramatically once they are fully vaccinated – and even if they do get sick, symptoms are likely to be much less severe.

The vaccines are safe. The pediatric vaccine has been specially formulated at a lower dose that is effective for younger children. We know from the clinical trial this vaccine is safe and highly effective against the Delta variant. Some mild side effects are normal, and more serious side effects are very rare. It may seem like the vaccines were developed quickly, but they are actually made using science that has been used for decades to treat other diseases.

We understand if you still have questions or want more information. If you do, please talk with your child's pediatrician or family doctor to learn more about the vaccines.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is free, quick and easy, with clinics and pharmacies all over the state providing vaccines without an appointment every day. To find a vaccine clinic near you, please visit [healthvermont.gov/KidsVaccine](http://healthvermont.gov/KidsVaccine). Many health care providers now also offer vaccine in their office, so you can also reach out to your child's provider.

Just like with the adult vaccine, the pediatric vaccine is a two-dose series. The sooner your child gets a first dose, the sooner they will be closer to full vaccine protection (two weeks after their second dose). Your child will not only have a greater chance to be healthy and stay in school safely, but will also help protect those who can't be vaccinated.

Thank you, and we are here for you when you are ready to get your shot,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mark Levine'.

Mark Levine, M.D.

Commissioner, Vermont Department of Health

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Dan French'.

Daniel M. French, Ed.D.

Secretary, Vermont Agency of Education