

[Date Here]

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s),

The fall marks the beginning of respiratory season. While many children may experience cold-like symptoms, such as runny nose, decrease in appetite, coughing, sneezing, and fever, respiratory viruses can be serious in younger children, leading to difficulty breathing and hospitalization.

Everyday **preventative actions** can help protect you and your loved ones from developing a respiratory illness like RSV, influenza (flu), or COVID-19. These actions include:

- **Washing your hands often** with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer,
- **Covering your coughs and sneezes** using a tissue or your elbow,
- **If your child is sick, keep them home** except to get medical care. Even if your school-aged child appears to have mild symptoms, their younger siblings can become very sick from the same virus,
- **Maximizing indoor ventilation and air circulation**, whenever possible by opening windows and hosting activities outdoors when feasible,
- **Wearing a mask** if you develop any symptoms, such as a runny nose, cough, or fever,
- **Wearing a mask** when in crowded places and when around individuals who are medically vulnerable.

**Vaccination** is the best way to protect you and your loved ones from becoming severely ill from respiratory illness, and it is an important part of reducing burden on hospitals from respiratory diseases.

Children under the age of 5 are especially vulnerable to developing serious complications from influenza, while older children can spread flu to their higher risk family members. For this reason, we recommend that all children over 6 months of age receive the influenza vaccine in early fall every year.

The new COVID-19 vaccine is available to all Chicagoans age 6 months and over. Visit [CDPH COVID Vaccine](#) for the most up-to-date science and recommendations.

The influenza vaccine may be administered on the same day as COVID-19 vaccine. To find an influenza or a COVID-19 vaccine:

- Contact your primary care provider.
- The Chicago Department of Public Health will continue to host **family vaccination clinics at City Colleges of Chicago** through November and December. These events will offer influenza vaccines, COVID-19 primary series AND the updated bivalent booster doses to all eligible Chicagoans. Registration is recommended and is available at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](#).
- CDPH is partnering with aldermen and organizations across all 50 wards to provide **flu and COVID-19 vaccination clinics** this fall, which will include the updated COVID-19 vaccine. This includes clinics held in partnership with the Department of Family and Support Services at

locations serving seniors and other congregate settings. View the full schedule and find an event near you at [Chicago.gov/VaxCalendar](https://chicago.gov/VaxCalendar) — events will be added as they are confirmed.

- Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov).

Finally, if your child is sick, consult with your primary care provider to be evaluated. If your child does not have a primary care provider check out the Resource Finder on our [OneChiFam](https://onechifam.org) website.

Thank you for playing your part in keeping our communities safe these fall and winter seasons.

Sincerely,

[SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS]