



Rocketship Public Schools DC Announces Vaccination Mandate for All Employees

Public charter school network becomes first in city to enforce mandate

On September 1, all employees of Rocketship Public Schools DC were notified that they are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 29, 2021. Rocketship DC is enacting this new vaccination policy for several reasons:

- The data clearly shows that people who are unvaccinated are significantly more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 and are significantly more likely to spread COVID-19 to others.
- The highly contagious delta variant of COVID-19 is driving a sharp increase in infections and hospitalizations, including among children.
- Children under 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccine. Rocketship DC is an elementary-only public school network which means all of our students are not currently eligible for vaccination. By requiring all staff members to be vaccinated, we can better protect the health and safety of our students.
- At each of our campuses, between 70 to 80% of our teachers have submitted proof of vaccination. Still, across all our schools 27 unvaccinated staff members have needed to quarantine during the first two weeks of this school year. This has put a large burden on other staff members who remain on-campus and must cover the gaps.
- Already this school year, multiple classes of students have been sent home to quarantine because of close contact with an unvaccinated staff member who tested positive for COVID-19. This puts a large burden on our families who must support their students' virtual learning from home.
- Ongoing classroom closures pose a serious long-term risk to our students' social-emotional development and academic growth. We must prioritize the needs of the whole child by keeping our students in school and safe.

While deciding to get vaccinated is a personal choice, it is a choice that impacts the health and well-being of our entire school community. Employees who choose to not get vaccinated, and don't receive a Rocketship-approved exemption, will be considered to have voluntarily resigned on October 29, 2021.

By being the first public school network to implement this policy in DC, we hope to inspire others to follow and do the same. By working together, we all can protect the health and well-being of our communities.