



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 47 (POWELL RIVER)

Board of Education

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Press Release

November 22, 2021

Re: Communication from School District 47 Powell River Board of Education on Vaccine Policy

In consultation with Vancouver Coastal Health, the weighing of evidence, impact, and the consequences for staff and students, the Powell River School District Board of Education will **not** mandate COVID-19 vaccines for staff.

Throughout this pandemic, our Board has relied heavily on Vancouver Coastal Health, our Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, and our Premier's office for Covid related matters and firmly believe that government should not leave the decision regarding vaccine mandates to individual school boards. While we support vaccines, we do not believe individual school boards should make such important health decisions that impact the entire province.

Information provided from Vancouver Coastal Health through our Public Health Officer is "that a vaccine mandate is unlikely to increase total protection to a degree that would have an appreciable impact on transmission in schools. This is in part due to the reviews indicating that your teams have been successful with safety plans that have resulted in schools being low risk environments, and thanks to excellent vaccine uptake in VCH. With rates as high as they are, there are diminishing returns for mandates, especially as they also galvanize a proportion of those vaccine hesitant folks into opposition. For population health measures to be successful, and for schools to operate safely, we do not believe that mandates are required".

We have a responsibility to keep schools open while making health and safety a priority. To date we have not been made aware of any confirmed cases of covid-19 in school-aged children in our community or transmission of covid within our schools even when we have had exposure notices.

We are **not** mandating vaccines for staff but encourage everyone to get a vaccine. We will continue to be diligent in following the covid safety measures and protocols in schools ([SD47 Communicable Disease Guidelines](#)).

We would like to thank staff, students, families, and our community, for being patient and compassionate towards one another and respecting differences as we all work towards the same goal of making schools and our community safe.

Ms. Dale Lawson
Chairperson
Board of Education
School District 47 (Powell River)