



NEWS RELEASE

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SD62 PROVIDES AN UPDATE ON COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATE

LANGFORD – After receiving advice and guidance from the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), public health, educational partners, Indigenous rights holders and the community, the Sooke School District (SD62) Board of Education has taken a step forward on the topic of a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for school district employees.

Effective immediately, any offer of employment to new hires in SD62 will be conditional upon proof of vaccination status or accommodation based on a Human Rights Exemption. This only applies to new hires and does not impact existing employees.

In addition, the Board has also directed the Superintendent of Schools and Chief Executive Officer, Scott Stinson, to plan for the possibility of implementing a vaccine mandate procedure for all employees should the Board determine that changes in transmission of COVID-19 warrant this. At this time, the Board has opted not to introduce this procedure but wants to be ready should this be necessary.

“Since beginning deliberations on whether to implement a vaccine mandate, the Board of Education has always wanted to ensure that we had all of the appropriate data, advice and guidance, in order to make an informed decision”, said Ravi Parmar, Chair of the Sooke School District, Board of Education. “We want to thank all those whose perspectives informed our deliberations. This decision was not taken lightly, and we recognize it will have an impact on the District and our community.”

On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, BCPSEA provided a template that could be used for a COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination Procedure for any Boards of Education that may consider the implementation of a procedure for employees in their school district.

In the absence of a public health order from the Provincial Health Officer, as employers, the Boards of Education are provided the opportunity to implement a vaccine mandate.

“The Board has been very clear in its support of everyone, who is eligible, getting vaccinated. We are unwavering in our support for public health and strongly encourage everyone in our community to get vaccinated”, said Parmar. “While we are not implementing a vaccine mandate for current employees today, the Board will continue to monitor the situation and is prepared to take further steps if warranted.”



Quick Facts:

- The Sooke School District represents the communities of Sooke, Port Renfrew, the Highlands, Metchosin, Colwood and Langford.
- There are over 1,800 employees who work for the Sooke School District.
- The Sooke School District is the fastest growing school district, per-capita, in the province with enrollment sitting at just under 12,000 students.

Media Contact:

Sue Grundy, (250) 893-2353 or scgrundy@sd62.bc.ca

Manager, Executive Operations