

September 22, 2021

Dear Ascend Families:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic Ascend has closely monitored the dynamic state of public health in our community and the frequently-evolving guidance for schools within the city and state. We have regularly updated our protocols and policies in response to new data or emerging practices whenever it has supported our mission to safely serve our students, staff, and community.

As you are likely aware, some significant changes have recently taken place which impact our community:

- The mayor of New York City recently announced that every education department employee will be required to be vaccinated this fall.
- The FDA has fully approved the Pfizer vaccine and it is anticipated that full approval of the Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines will follow shortly.
- Community transmission and infection rates are rapidly rising as new virus variants continue to spread - particularly among unvaccinated populations.

Consistent with the evolving landscape, and most importantly, in order to ensure the health and safety of our students – most of whom are not yet eligible to receive a vaccine, Ascend has decided to modify our policy on **adult** vaccinations. Families are invited to view the new adult vaccination policy [HERE](#).

Under this policy, all staff, contractors, interns and volunteers will be required to be vaccinated by December 1, 2021. Exemptions may be made for medical and religious reasons. Our goal is to provide our Ascend community with a consistently safe and healthy environment where exceptional learning happens.

Please note that there is ***no change in our student vaccination policy*** and we continue to follow the [New York State Immunization Requirements for School Entrance/Attendance](#).

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust in Ascend to serve your family.

Sincere regards,

Recy Benjamin Dunn
Chief Executive Officer