

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**February 15, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**Eastview Public School**

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- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good morning.
- As the Mayor said, it is wonderful to be here in Scarborough this morning at this school vaccination clinic.
- For children and their families, schools are places of familiarity, comfort and trust. So, it makes sense to bring vaccines to students and their families right here.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and provide essential protection which extends to the child's household and community.
- While children are less likely to get really sick from COVID-19, they can still develop serious complications from a COVID-19 infection.
- As a result of the emergence of the Omicron variant in December 2021, Toronto hospitalization rates in children and youth aged 0 to 17 years were higher than any other time in the pandemic, peaking in early January of this year.
- Even kids who have really mild initial infections that do not require hospitalization can end up experiencing long-term effects which can impact multiple parts of the body including the heart, the lungs, the brain and eyes.
- These are rare but they're serious, and can require hospitalization, and may even require an ICU stay.
- And even if kids don't show symptoms of COVID-19, they can still spread the virus to members of their family and other people in their lives.
- Children exposed to the COVID-19 virus who are vaccinated are less likely to get infected, and so are more likely to be able to continue attending school and to participate in other activities without disruption.

- Yesterday, as the Mayor just said, the Province announced that all youth aged 12 to 17 who received their second dose at least 168 days ago–will now be able to receive the benefits of a third dose of vaccine.
- Initial data show that COVID-19 boosters help broaden and strengthen protection against COVID-19 including the Omicron variants.
- If you have questions about vaccines for you or your children, I encourage you to speak to a knowledgeable health care provider who you trust who can help you make decisions about your family’s health.
- As Vax the East continues this week, I encourage every Scarborough resident who has questions about vaccines (whether for children or for adults), to call their primary care provider or use the Scarborough Health Network Vax Facts service.
- Bringing vaccines to where children live, study and play – like our Team Toronto partners are doing today right here in Scarborough – is key to ensuring every child and their family members have access to COVID-19 vaccines.
- Now is an ideal time for parents and their children to receive their COVID-19 vaccines if they have yet to do so. It's the best protection available against COVID-19.
- It's the best protection for them, for their friends and their families, and for our community.