

## TO THE PARENTS OF SECONDARY 3 STUDENTS

### RE: School vaccination program

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In Québec, the legal age for consent to health care is 14. Your child can therefore consent to the vaccination offered at school himself/herself. The information below is provided to help you assist your child with his/her decision.

#### HPV vaccine

HPV stands for human papillomavirus. HPVs are among the most common viruses in the world and are very numerous. There are more than 100 types that can infect different parts of the body.

You can be infected by more than one HPV at the same time, and more than once in your lifetime. HPVs are the cause of almost all cervical cancers. Some HPVs can cause condylomas (anal or genital warts) and precancerous lesions on the genitals or cervix as well as cancers of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, mouth, and throat. Any person who engages in sexual activity can catch an HPV. HPVs are transmitted through skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity, even without penetration. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Since September 2016, HPV vaccination is being offered to both boys and girls in Grade 4 Elementary. When the program was launched, the sole purpose of the vaccine was to prevent cervical cancer. Because girls were more directly affected by this type of cancer prevention, only they received the vaccine. Since then, many scientific studies have shown that the HPV vaccine protects boys against condylomas and a form of HPV-associated anal cancer. To ensure maximum protection, the vaccine should be administered before youth become sexually active. The free HPV vaccination offered in Elementary Grade 4 helps to better reach youth and vaccinate them before they become sexually active. The vaccine is safe and extremely effective. Québec experts have deemed that two doses administered before age 18 are sufficient to protect youth against HPVs.

Girls who didn't receive two doses of the HPV vaccine in Grade 4 can be vaccinated in Secondary 3. Boys in Secondary 3 will not be vaccinated against HPV in school. Since January 1, 2016, however, males age 9 to 26 who are or plan to be sexually active with same-sex partners can be vaccinated against HPV for free at their local CLSC. The school nurse can provide more information to any young man who is interested.

You will find information on HPVs and the HPV vaccine at the following addresses:

- Portail santé mieux-être: [www.sante.gouv.qc.ca/en](http://www.sante.gouv.qc.ca/en)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/hpv-vph/hpv-vph-vaccine-eng.php>
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada: [www.hpvinfos.ca/](http://www.hpvinfos.ca/)

#### Diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus vaccine, meningococcal C conjugate vaccine, and vaccination record update

- In fall 2004, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux initiated a whooping cough vaccination program in schools for boys and girls in Secondary 3. Your child will have the opportunity to receive a dose of the Tdap vaccine, which protects against tetanus (T), diphtheria (d) and pertussis or whooping cough (ap). Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) are very serious diseases caused by bacteria. Vaccinating our children keeps them and others protected against these diseases. Even if your child has been vaccinated against diphtheria and tetanus in the past five years (e.g., following an injury or animal bite or before travel), the Tdap vaccine is recommended for protecting him/her against whooping cough.
- Meningococcus is a bacteria that can cause severe infections such as meningitis and blood infection (septicemia). A dose of the meningococcal C conjugate (Men-C) vaccine at age 12 months is part of the vaccination schedule. To maintain the individual and group protection (group immunity) that the vaccine provides, Québec experts recommend administering an additional dose of the Men-C vaccine to children in Secondary 3.
- Tdap and Men-C vaccinations will be available to boys and girls in Secondary 3. For girls who were not vaccinated in Elementary Grade 4, the first dose of the HPV vaccine will be administered at the same time as the Tdap and Men-C vaccines. The second dose of the HPV vaccine will be administered 6 months after the first. Boys in Secondary 3 will not be vaccinated against HPV in school. There is no risk in receiving several vaccines in one session. This is a safe method that is practiced around the world.

- When your child is vaccinated, the nurse will take the opportunity to check his/her vaccination record to see whether he/she has received all doses of diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, rubella (German measles), mumps, chickenpox,<sup>1</sup> hepatitis B, and HPV (girls only) vaccines as indicated in the Quebec Immunisation Schedule. The nurse can then administer any missing vaccinations so that your child is fully protected against these diseases, which still exist. Even without a vaccination record, the nurse will still be able to offer your child the recommended vaccinations.

For more information on vaccinations and diseases that can be prevented through vaccination, please visit Portail santé mieux-être at <http://www.sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/dossiers/vaccination/>.

Your child will receive an information pamphlet on the side effects that may appear within 24 to 72 hours of being vaccinated and what to do to alleviate them.

Vaccinations at Massey-Vanier High School will take place on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 2018.

**Please ensure your child brings his/her vaccination record so that the vaccinations administered can be entered into it.** Health insurance cards are not required.

If you would like more information, please contact Cindy Tuppert (school nurse) at 450-263-6660 # 57239 or go to [[www.sante.gouv.qc.ca/vaccination](http://www.sante.gouv.qc.ca/vaccination)].

Thank you for your cooperation.

Cindy Tuppert

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Massey-Vanier High School

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450-266-4342 opt 4. # 34465 (CLSC)

450-263-6660 # 57239 (School)

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<sup>1</sup> If your child had chickenpox after age 1, he/she is considered protected. To ensure the vaccination presents no difficulties, you are recommended to inform your child whether he/she has had chickenpox. The vaccine has been available free of charge since January 2006.