



United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Indian Education/Pine Ridge School
Great Plains Region
PO Box 1202
Pine Ridge, SD 57770



9/22/21

Dear Students, Parents, and Families,

Our Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) School plays a critical role by promoting equity in learning in our community. A community like so many Tribal communities that have been affected by the ongoing pandemic. As such, it remains our top priority to diminish risk and provide the safest educational environment possible for our students.

On September 9, 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration implemented an Executive Order on Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Vaccination for Federal Employees, including BIE employees and school faculty, to halt the spread of COVID-19 and the B.1.617.2 (Delta) Variant. The Executive Order, alongside U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Deb Haaland's September 2, 2021 Secretarial Order 3402, is intended to help prevent future COVID-19 variant outbreaks and to protect students and faculty at BIE-operated elementary schools, secondary schools, off-reservation boarding schools, and peripheral dormitories. The Secretarial Order requires educators to receive a COVID-19 vaccine no later than October 15, 2021 to support BIE-operated schools return to safe, in-person instruction for the 2021–2022 school year.

With this emphasis on vaccination for BIE employees and school-level faculty, also know that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 12 years of age and older receive a COVID-19 vaccination to help protect against the virus. Widespread vaccination is a critical tool in halting the pandemic and allowing schools to provide in-person education activities. Data shows that vaccines may help keep people from spreading COVID-19 to others. Vaccines may also help keep children from serious sickness even if they catch COVID-19. Children 12 years of age and older are now eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. The Federal government also continues to review other viable COVID-19 vaccinations and vaccine-eligible age groups.

As we work to provide as safe a school environment as possible this school year, please help protect your family by getting yourself and your eligible children vaccinated against COVID-19. This will help make sure all our students have the opportunity to learn in a safe and healthy environment. To support this, I have enclosed a flyer with quick access links to CDC vaccine information and the best means for locating a free COVID-19 vaccine provider near you.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at 605-867-5198 and visit the BIE website at www.bie.edu.

Respectfully, 
Michael Carlow, Principal Pine Ridge School