

Most grade schools require all students to show proof of diphtheria, tetanus, MMR and other vaccines. Will they mandate COVID shots as well?

Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine was authorized for use in children as young as 12 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration... but do not expect schools to require shots for students anytime soon given public hesitation and political hurdles.

State governments for the most part can order a vaccine be required for a child to attend a K-12 public school, said Dorit Rubinstein Reiss, a University of California-Hastings law professor who researches school mandates and the legal issues around vaccines... No state government has mandated COVID-19 immunizations for schools, she added.

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Some private schools are moving ahead with mandates. In Connecticut, students attending the 5th-12th grade St. Luke's school in New Canaan... must take the COVID-19 vaccine to attend in the fall.

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[St. Luke's head of school Mark] Davis said he understood COVID-19 has set off pitched debates, but pointed to the long history of mandated vaccines for diseases such as polio and whooping cough and the benefits of in-class learning for kids.

"It's such a shame that the issue of vaccines has become politicized," Davis said. "It's a critical step toward a much-needed return to the school experience that we all yearn for."

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