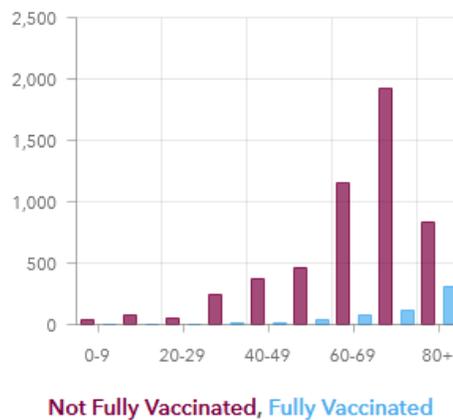


## Key points for Senate Education: Omicron and Vermont schools

January 11, 2022

- The [median incubation period](#) for Omicron is ~3 days, which is [shorter than previous variants](#).
  - This means that someone with new Omicron infection might be contagious as early as 1-2 days after exposure.
  - With so many cases and such a rapidly transmissible virus, it is unlikely for contact tracing to be effective at interrupting transmission.
- Surveillance testing is designed to catch unknown, asymptomatic infections, which invariably represent a small fraction of cases, in order to isolate and contact trace.
  - As noted above, contact tracing Omicron is very low-yield.
  - There is not a shortage of cases to be found at this time...
- Risk of severe COVID-19 has been and remains low in children, particularly vaccinated children:

**Hospitalizations** per 100,000 People for the Past 90 Days by Age Group



<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/current-activity/case-dashboard>. Accessed online Jan 10, 2022.

- Rational approaches that reduce burden on school staff and ensure open schools for children while still providing resources to identify new cases (i.e. testing) are now needed.
- Vermont is not alone in shifting school-based tactics. This week, the highly respected PolicyLab at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) unveiled [very similar recommendations](#).
- On a societal level, an important transition is in progress—learning how to incorporate the risk of COVID-19 into the background of our daily living.
- Vaccination and boosters, wearing high-quality masks, staying home when sick, and avoiding crowded indoor places are still important public health strategies, more so than contact tracing and surveillance testing in the Omicron era.