**Sample Letter (Public Schools) Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**

[Insert Date]

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As a parent there is nothing more important than safeguarding your child’s health. The Washington State Legislature requires us to make information available to you about human papillomavirus (HPV) and how to prevent it. Know the facts about HPV and the vaccine available to protect your child.

**What is HPV?**

HPV is a very common virus that can cause cancers later in life. Nearly 42 million people are currently infected with HPV in the United States. About 13 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year.

In the U.S., an estimated 36,000 people are affected by a cancer caused by HPV infection each year. While there is screening for cervical cancer that can detect cancer early, there is no recommended screening for the other cancers caused by HPV infection, like cancers of the back of the throat, anus, penis, vagina, or vulva.

**How can I protect my child from HPV?**

HPV vaccination provides safe, effective, and lasting protection against the HPV infections that most commonly cause cancer. HPV vaccination works extremely well. HPV vaccine has the potential to prevent more than 90% of HPV-attributable cancers.

Since HPV vaccination was first recommended in 2006, infections with HPV types that cause most HPV cancers and genital warts have dropped 88% among teen girls and 81% among young adult women.

**Who should get the vaccine and when should they get it?**

Because the vaccine is more effective when given at younger ages, two doses of HPV vaccine are recommended for all boys and girls starting at age 9. If boys or girls do not get the first dose of HPV vaccine before age 15, they will need three doses. In addition to HPV vaccine, your 11- to 12 year-old should receive Tdap and meningococcal vaccines.

**Where can I find the HPV vaccine?**

Ask your doctor, nurse, or local health department to find out more about HPV vaccine and where you can get it. Washington provides all recommended vaccines at no cost for kids through age 18 through the Childhood Vaccine Program. Participating providers may charge an office visit fee and an administration fee to give the vaccine. People who can’t afford the administration fee can ask to have it waived. This provider map can be used to find providers in the Childhood Vaccine Program: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/vaccinemap/>.

**For more information on HPV, the vaccine, and cancer prevention:**

* Washington State Department of Health

[www.doh.wa.gov/hpv](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hpv)

* Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/hpv](http://www.cdc.gov/hpv)

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME AND TITLE]