

# FAQ\_Providers

## Immunization Regulations Frequently Asked Questions For Providers

In Reference to K-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students
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### Which schools need to comply with these regulations?

- All K-12<sup>th</sup> grade schools in Vermont need to comply.

### Do these regulations affect ALL students in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade?

- NO. Only students enrolling in kindergarten or 7<sup>th</sup> grade and any student who is newly enrolling into a school, regardless of grade, are affected by this.

### What does newly enrolling mean?

- There are several examples of this. Most common examples include: 1) a student who just moved to Vermont will be newly enrolling into a school in Vermont; and 2) a student who relocated within Vermont will be newly enrolling into a school, so long as that new school is not within the same school district or supervisory union as his/her previous one. Students who go from an elementary school into middle school or from a middle school into a high school within the same school district ARE NOT considered to be newly enrolling.

### If a student newly enrolls into a grade other than the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which immunizations do they need as a condition of enrollment?

- Students newly enrolling into a school will need to have the same immunizations as students in kindergarten (if the student is newly enrolling into the 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade) or students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (if the student is newly enrolling into the 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

### Which vaccines will students now need before enrolling into school?

- This depends on the grade the student will be entering:

**Students entering kindergarten** will be required to have received the following in accordance with ACIP recommendations on the scheduling of vaccinations and on minimal intervals between doses, allowing for the ACIP-approved four-day grace period:

- 5 DTaP – 4 if the 4<sup>th</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 4 Polio – 3 if the 3<sup>rd</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 2 Measles

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- 2 Mumps
- 2 Rubella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 2 Varicella – waived if the parent or guardian presents a Department-supplied form indicating the student has a history of disease

**Students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade** will be required to have received the following in accordance with ACIP recommendations on the scheduling of vaccinations and on minimal intervals between doses, allowing for the ACIP-approved four-day grace period:

- 5 DTaP/DTP – 4 doses if the 4<sup>th</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. For students who, after the sixth birthday, have not completed these requirements three doses of Td or 2 doses of Td and one dose of Tdap is acceptable.
- 4 Polio – 3 if the 3<sup>rd</sup> dose was given on/after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 2 Measles
- 2 Mumps
- 2 Rubella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 1 Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (only for students attending residential-based schools (such as boarding schools) who live at these facilities.
- 2 Varicella - waived if the parent or guardian presents a Department-supplied form indicating the student has a history of disease
- 1 Tdap booster

### **What is the ACIP-approved four day grace period?**

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) states that vaccine doses administered up to 4 days before the minimum interval or age can be counted as valid doses. However, doses administered 5 days or more prior to the minimum interval or age are not valid doses, and should be repeated.

**The previous regulations required that “students who have not received any vaccine containing tetanus toxoid in ten years shall receive a booster dose of a vaccine containing tetanus toxoid.” Does this still apply?**

- NO. Only students entering the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and any student newly enrolling in 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade need to have a booster dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine. Specifically, the regulations require that Tdap be given. Use of any other tetanus-containing vaccine requires that an exemption be filled out. The reason for this is to ensure that students receive protection against pertussis, in addition to tetanus.

### **Can students still claim exemptions?**

- YES. Exemptions are still allowed if there is a medical contraindication to a specific immunization or if the parent/guardian claims a moral or religious objection to

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immunization. If there are medical contraindications, the student's health care provider will need to assist the parent/guardian by signing a form indicating which immunizations are contraindicated and why. The form will be available through the schools or can be obtained by contacting the Immunization Program. The form will also be available on our website. Though the law and in turn the regulations state a parent can claim an exemption if the student is in the process of being immunized, in practice, such circumstances are not considered exemptions, and need to be handled differently. How these circumstances are addressed is answered in the next question.

### **Can students be admitted if they don't yet have the required immunizations?**

- YES. A school official can provisionally admit a student who is in the process of getting the required immunizations, so long as the student's health care provider completes a form indicating the student is in the process of getting immunized. The form is available through the schools or can be obtained by contacting the Immunization Program. The form will also be available on our website. Provisional admittance is temporary and used when waiting between doses of vaccine series, waiting for a scheduled appointment for vaccination, or waiting for transferred records to arrive.

### **Do I as Provider need to verify that my patient has had chickenpox?**

- NO. The child's parents can verify this by signing a form stating their child has had chickenpox. The form is available through the schools or can be obtained by contacting the Immunization Program. The form will also be available on our website. **This form does not need to be completed or signed by a health care provider, as many providers may not be able to verify their patients had disease.**

### **If there are students that are still not in compliance with the current requirements, does the school still need to work to ensure the student is in compliance?**

- YES. If there are students that are still not in compliance with the current requirements and the school is working with that student, his/her parent or provider to bring this student in compliance, then it is important to continue to bring the student in compliance.

### **Where can I find a complete version of the new regulations?**

- The new regulations can be found at the following webpage: <http://healthvermont.gov/hc/imm/index.aspx> or by going to the Health Department's home page: <http://healthvermont.gov>, then clicking on "Contents A-Z" then clicking on "Immunization Information for Families and Providers").

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## In Reference to Post-secondary School Students

### Which schools need to comply with these regulations?

- ONLY schools with campus-based settings need to comply. Schools with non-campus-based settings are specifically exempt. Schools that are exempt DO NOT need to collect any immunization information on their students and DO NOT need to report anything to the Health Department.

### Which schools meet the definition of a “campus-based setting”?

- The new regulations define campus-based settings as schools “. . . where students regularly congregate in such areas as, but not limited to: residence halls, classrooms, athletic facilities, chapels, assembly halls, dining facilities, clubs, lounges, fraternities and sororities, and internal transportation systems.” The Health Department has tentatively determined which schools meet this definition and which ones don’t. We will be working with individual schools to verify this. This will be done by mailing a letter to all post-secondary schools and asking them to verify (yes/no) whether they agree with our decision. In the meantime, the list of schools that we feel need to comply is attached.

### Do these new requirements apply to ALL post-secondary school students?

NO. These new requirements only apply to the following:

- All students born after 1956 who are enrolling into a health science program either part-time or full-time.
- All students born after 1956 enrolling more than half time as undergraduates WITH THE EXCEPTION OF students whose instruction solely involves research, field work, or study away from the school.
- All students born after 1956 who are attending school either part-time or full – time while on a student or other visa, including a student attending or visiting classes or programs as part of a formal academic visitation or exchange program.

All students born during or before 1956, all undergraduate students enrolled half-time or less, and all graduate students are exempt.

### Which vaccines will students now need before enrolling into school?

- **Students entering a post-secondary school** will be required to have received the following in accordance with ACIP recommendations on the scheduling of vaccinations and on minimal intervals between doses, allowing for the ACIP-approved four-day grace period:
  - 1 Tdap/Td booster administered within the past 10 years
  - 2 Measles

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- 2 Mumps
- 2 Rubella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 1 Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (only for first year students living in dormitories)
- 2 Varicella – waived if student presents a Department-supplied form indicating a history of disease

### **What is the ACIP-approved four day grace period?**

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) states that vaccine doses administered up to 4 days before the minimum interval or age can be counted as valid doses. However, doses administered 5 days or more prior to the minimum interval or age are not valid doses, and should be repeated.

### **Can students still claim exemptions?**

- YES. Exemptions are still allowed if there is a medical contraindication to a specific immunization or if the student claims a moral or religious objection to immunization. If there are medical contraindications, the student's health care provider will need to assist them by signing a form indicating which immunizations are contraindicated and why. The form will be available through the schools or can be obtained by contacting the Immunization Program. The form will also be available on our website. Though the law and in turn the regulations state a student can claim an exemption if they are in the process of being immunized, in practice, such circumstances are not considered exemptions, and need to be handled differently. How these circumstances are addressed is answered in the next question.

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