

FAQ_K-12th Grade Schools

Immunization Regulations Frequently Asked Questions For K-12th Grade School Officials

Which schools need to comply with these regulations?

- All K-12th grade schools in Vermont need to comply.

Do these regulations affect ALL students in K-12th grade?

- NO. Only students enrolling in kindergarten or 7th 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 or supervisory union ARE NOT considered to be newly enrolling.

If a student newly enrolls into a grade other than the 7th 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 1st – 6th grade) or students in the 7th grade (if the student is newly enrolling into the 8th – 12th 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 4th dose was given on/after the 4th birthday
- 4 Polio – 3 if the 3rd dose was given on/after the 4th birthday
- 2 Measles
- 2 Mumps

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- 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 7th 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 4th dose was given on/after the 4th 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 3rd dose was given on/after the 4th 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 7th grade and any student newly enrolling in 8th – 12th 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 immunization. Parents will need to provide the appropriate form to claim an

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exemption. 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.

How do I know that a student has had chickenpox disease (and does not need to have had the 2 doses of the chickenpox vaccine)?

- Parents will need to sign 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. **This is not considered an exemption and the exemption form should not be used for this purpose.**

What requirements are being asked of schools?

- As in the past, schools will be required to verify that students have obtained the required immunizations or are exempt from one or more of them. However, schools need only verify compliance when a student enters kindergarten or 7th grade or when a student, regardless of grade, newly enrolls into a school. **Schools do not need to verify compliance for any other students.**
- In addition to verifying compliance, schools will also be required to report information to the Immunization Program. **School will ONLY be required to report on students enrolling in kindergarten and 7th grade.** We will not be asking schools to report on students who newly enrolled.

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 your school is working with that student, his/her parent or provider

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What additional information will be provided to help us in meeting those requirements?

- Additional information that will assist schools in meeting these requirements will be provided in a manual. That manual is presently being prepared and we will have that to you by May.

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").