

FAQ_Post-Secondary Schools

Immunization Regulations Frequently Asked Questions For Post-secondary School Officials

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 Immunization Program.

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 Immunization Program has tentatively determined which schools meet this definition and which ones don’t. We are 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.

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:

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- 1 Tdap/Td booster administered within the past 10 years
- 2 Measles
- 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. Students will need to provide the appropriate form to claim an exemption. The form is available through the schools or can be obtained by contacting the Immunization Program. The form is also available on our website. Though the law and in turn the regulations states a student 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 is also 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)?

- Students will need to sign a form stating they had chickenpox. The form is available through the schools or can be obtained by contacting the Immunization Program. The

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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 initially enrolls into a post-secondary school. This commonly occurs when a student enrolls as a freshman, but may also occur when a student transfers from one post-secondary school to another.
- In addition to verifying compliance, schools will also be required to report information to the Immunization Program. **School will be required to report on all students for which they have verified records on.**

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 to bring him/her in compliance, then it is important to continue to bring the student in compliance.

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").