



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mohammed Choudhury, Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Superintendents
Local Health Officers

FROM: Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools 
Nilesh Kalyanaraman, Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services 

DATE: June 2, 2023

SUBJECT: **Important Updates and Reminders Related to School Immunizations**

This memorandum provides several important updates and reminders related to school immunization requirements for the 2023-2024 school year. Adherence to immunization requirements ensures students can begin the school year in accordance with regulations and helps reduce the transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases in the school environment. Please review the following items carefully:

1. School Immunization Requirements for the 2023-2024 School Year

All school requirements are listed in [COMAR 10.06.04](#) and will be in effect at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. Students who do not have the required vaccinations on the first day of school must demonstrate proof of vaccination, positive titer results, or proof of a vaccination appointment that is scheduled within 20 calendar days from the date the student is temporarily admitted or retained. **To reduce the number of students that might be out of compliance at the start of the 2023-2024 school year, school health officials should begin now to complete assessments of school immunization records and inform the parents/guardians of children out of compliance.** We request your assistance in implementing activities to ensure students in your jurisdiction are in compliance with the school immunization requirements.

Suggested activities include:

- Informing parents of the requirements through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., school emails, social media postings, press releases, media ads) prior to the start of the 2023-2024 school year and encouraging them to ensure their child is up to date;
- Partnering with community providers to provide vaccinations in a range of settings;

- Partnering between the local school system with the local health department to conduct school located vaccination clinics;
- Partnering with school-based health centers to provide needed vaccinations to enrollees; and,
- Implementing local media campaigns highlighting school immunization requirements.

2. School Access to ImmuNet, Maryland's Immunization Information System

School health personnel can access student vaccination records in ImmuNet, Maryland's Immunization Information System, to determine if the student has all required immunizations. If your staff needs access to ImmuNet, please complete an [enrollment form](#) to set up an account. If you need assistance, please email the ImmuNet Help Desk at mdh.mdimmunet@maryland.gov.

3. Consumer Access to ImmuNet through Maryland MyIR

Maryland residents can access their own immunization records in ImmuNet and print out the Maryland 896 form without having to go to their healthcare provider or local health department through [Maryland MyIR](#) (My Immunization Record), a free website service.

4. Temporary Admission to School and School Exclusion for Immunization Non-Compliance

[COMAR 10.06.04.06](#) allows a student who does not meet the immunization requirements to be temporarily admitted or retained in school if the parent/guardian provides evidence of the student's appointment with a healthcare provider or local health department to 1) receive the required immunization; 2) reconstruct a lost or destroyed record; or 3) document evidence of age-appropriate immunity on the [MD 896 form](#). **The actual appointment should be no later than 20 calendar days following the date the student was temporarily admitted or retained.** Students out of compliance with the immunization requirements may not be admitted to or be retained in school without evidence of an appointment. The parent/guardian must present evidence of an appointment on **DAY ONE** of admittance or retention to the school.

Evidence of an appointment may include the following:

- An appointment slip or note from the healthcare provider's office indicating the student has an appointment no later than 20 calendar days from the date the student is temporarily admitted or retained;
- A verbal or written statement from the parent/guardian indicating the appointment date with a healthcare provider, no later than 20 calendar days from the date the student is temporarily admitted or retained; or

- A verbal or written statement from the parent/guardian indicating their intent to attend a local health department immunization clinic within 20 calendar days from the date the student is temporarily admitted or retained.

If the student is on a catch-up schedule and is required to receive two or more doses to complete a vaccine series to meet the school immunization requirements, the temporary admittance or retention process should again be applied once the first dose is administered.. Since most vaccine series require an interval of greater than 20 days between doses, a healthcare provider may complete and sign a temporary medical contraindication statement for the student to be temporarily retained in school. The date of the end of the temporary medical contraindication statement should correspond to when the next dose is due (e.g., the appointment for the next dose) and is the date when the 20-day temporary admission or retention is reapplied. If neither an appointment date nor a medical contraindication is provided after the first dose in the series, the student must be excluded.

5. Special Populations

- **Homeless students** - According to [COMAR 13A.05.09.05](#) students who are identified as homeless may not be denied enrollment due to failure to comply with immunization requirements. COMAR states: "The school shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local school system coordinator, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or medical records. The school may not bar enrollment of the homeless student until it has made a diligent effort to assist the parent with obtaining necessary immunizations or records of prior immunization."
- **Military children** - Maryland is a member state that has enacted the guidelines of the [Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#). This compact sets rules that guide school systems in the issues that affect military children. Students covered under the Compact include: children of active duty members of the uniformed services, including members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders; members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year; members who died on active duty, for a period of one year beyond the death; uniformed members of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Public Health Services. The Compact agreement states the following

regarding immunizations: "Compacting states shall give thirty (30) calendar days from the date of enrollment. For a series of immunizations, initial vaccinations must be obtained within 30 calendar days."

The attached decision tree algorithms are provided as a resource for schools and local health departments regarding the information in this memo.

For more information and resources for the new school immunization requirements, please visit the [Center for Immunization, Back to School webpage](#). If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Michal Thornton, (Nurse Consultant, Center for Immunization) at michal.thornton@maryland.gov; Jamie Perry (Director of School Health - MDH) at jamie.perry3@maryland.gov; or Alicia Mezu (Health Services Specialist - MSDE) at alicia.mezu@maryland.gov.

Attachment: Immunization Decision Tree Algorithm

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