

IMMUNIZATION OF SCHOOL PUPILS ACT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FOR FAMILIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS – March 2024

1. Why does the Health Unit review student immunization records?

- By law, the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) R.S.O.1990 (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90i01>) requires public health units to maintain and review vaccine records for every student attending school in their region. The local Health Unit is also required to contact parents/guardians of students who have incomplete immunization records.
- To protect community health and well-being, public health units in Ontario are required to enforce school suspension on students who have not yet received mandated vaccines according to the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario (https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/docs/Publicly_Funded_ImmunizationSchedule.pdf). Immunizations for COVID-19 are not included in this requirement.

2. Why did my child receive an immunization notice?

- The Health Unit has not yet received immunization record(s) showing the student has the required vaccines to attend school. This could be the case even if the child is up to date on their vaccinations.
- Under the ISPA, parents/guardians are required to provide their local public health unit with vaccine records. Health care providers and schools are not required to do this.
- A vaccine the student received may not meet the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act or the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario (e.g., the vaccine was given too early).

3. My family doesn't have a health care provider. What do I do?

- If your child is missing required vaccines, you can book an immunization appointment with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (<https://www.wechu.org/getimmunized>) or call 519-960-0231, ext. 1222.
- Many local walk-in clinics also provide routine immunizations.
- You can also visit the Health Unit's website (<https://www.wechu.org/your-health/find-doctor>) for information about finding a health care provider.

4. What happens if I do not provide the required information to the Health Unit?

- The **deadline** for elementary students to provide missing immunization information to the WECHU is Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 6 pm.
- After the deadline, elementary students whose immunizations records have not been updated with the WECHU will be suspended from school for up to 20 days starting on Friday, March 1, 2024.
- Suspended elementary students can return to school once their records are up to date with the WECHU, or they have submitted a valid exemption (Medical or Conscience or Religious Belief).

5. What if I choose not to immunize my child?

You must have a valid Conscience or Religious Belief or Medical exemption on file at the Health Unit. Visit our website to learn about exemptions: <https://www.wechu.org/your-health/immunization>.

6. What if my child has an exemption?

Your child should not have received a suspension order if you have a valid exemption on file with the WECHU. Please contact the WECHU at 519-960-0231, ext. 1222 to verify your child's records.

QUESTIONS ABOUT REPORTING IMMUNIZATIONS

1. My health care provider vaccinated my child. Don't they send the information to the Health Unit?

If your child received an immunization(s) from their health care provider, the vaccinations need to be reported to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. Health care providers are not required to update this information with their local Health Unit.

2. Why might my child's immunization record be incomplete?

Note vaccinations that have been given by the WECHU (e.g., at a school immunization clinic or Health Unit office) are entered by the WECHU in the provincial immunization database. The WECHU provides a paper record to clients after vaccinations which should be shared by parents/guardians with the family's health care provider.

3. How do I report my child's vaccinations?

You can report your child's vaccinations to the Health Unit in the following ways:

- Online at immune.wechu.org (<https://immune.wechu.org/>).
- Call the Health Unit at 519-960-0231 ext. 1222 or toll-free at 1-800-265-5822 ext. 1222.
- Fax the record to 519-258-7288.
- You do not need to report your child's COVID-19 immunizations to the Health Unit.

QUESTIONS ABOUT IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

1. What if my child's record is in another language?

If your child has an immunization record in a language other than English or French, please have the record translated and bring the translated record to the Health Unit. Here are some services that may help:

- Multicultural Council (MCC) of Windsor-Essex translates immunization records for a fee; this service takes between 4 to 6 weeks. A nurse practitioner from the MCC also provides student immunizations. For more information, visit <https://themcc.com/> or call 519-255-1127.
- New Canadians' Centre for Excellence translates immunization records for free; this service takes between 4 to 6 weeks. For more information, visit <https://www.ncceinc.org/> or call 519-258-4076.
- VON Immigrant Health Clinic provides free translation of immunization records that are in Latin letters or Arabic languages; this service takes about 1 to 2 weeks. Vaccines can be administered to students who are clients of their clinic. For more information, visit <https://von.ca/en/service-categories/health-community> or call 519-916-4370.