

Vaccination requirements to attend school in Ontario

Information for parents and guardians

What is the Immunization of School Pupils Act?

The Immunization of School Pupils Act R.S.O. 1990 (ISPA) is the Ontario law that requires students have up-to-date vaccinations (or a valid statement of exemption for medical reasons, reasons of conscience or religious beliefs) in order to attend school. Under ISPA legislation, students can be suspended from school if they do not have all the required vaccinations for (diphtheria, polio, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal disease, and pertussis). Children born after January 1, 2010, are also required to have vaccination against varicella (chicken pox).

Why are students suspended from school for not having up-to-date vaccination records?

Immunization protects your child from vaccine preventable diseases and reduces the risk of disease outbreaks in schools.

In accordance with this law, NWHU is mandated to enforce the legislation. Enforcement is conducted through a process where the last step is a suspension order.

NWHU will send a reminder and issue orders to school principals to suspend students if records are incomplete.

Virtual learners are still required to receive necessary vaccines; however, a suspension will not be executed.

Who is responsible for reporting immunizations to NWHU?

It is the parents/guardians' responsibility to report their child's immunizations to NWHU. Although some health care providers' offices do report children's immunizations to us, they are not mandated to do so.

Parents and guardians can take the following steps to ensure that their child meets the immunization requirements:

- Check with their health care provider to ensure their child's immunization record is up to date.
- Ensure that their child's updated immunization record has been reported to NWHU.

Parents and guardians of students 15 years of age and younger can access and update their child's immunization record by:

- Calling their local NWHU office
- Emailing vaccines@nwhu.on.ca (for record requests only)
- Submit immunization records through by visiting <https://nwhu.icon.ehealthontario.ca/>

Students 16 years of age and older can access and update their own records.

How can I report my child's vaccinations to NWHU?

- Online: the online reporting tool is available at <https://nwhu.icon.ehealthontario.ca/>
- In person: bring a copy of your child's immunization record to any of our locations during regular business hours.
- By phone: Call your local NWHU office location
- Fax: a copy of your child's record can be faxed to 807-468-3813

Where can my child receive vaccination?

- Health care provider
- Your local NWHU office location

You must obtain a written copy of the vaccine record and contact NWHU to report the vaccines.

Can my child be exempted from vaccination?

We encourage parents and guardians to ensure their child is protected against vaccine preventable diseases.

If however, parents or guardians require a vaccine exemption for their child there are two types:

- **Statement of Medical Exemption:**
This form must be completed and signed by a physician or nurse practitioner, stating the reason for the medical exemption.
- **Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief:**
The affidavit must be sworn by a Commissioner of Oaths. Parents and guardians must also complete an education session on immunization. The session can be completed online or in person at your local nwhu office location.

Both forms can be downloaded from the Ontario government website at www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca. Individuals who complete the education session online will be able to print off a certificate of completion and the exemption form.

Parents and guardians can contact NWHU for assistance with this process.

The completed exemption forms must be submitted to NWHU. For your protection, students who do not have the required vaccinations may be excluded in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease in their school.

How long can my child be suspended?

The suspension may last for up to 20 school days until records are provided, reviewed, and approved by NWHU.

Who can parents and guardians speak to for more information?

Contact your local nwhu office and ask to speak to a public health nurse in the vaccine preventable disease program.

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