

# Infectious Diseases Immunization Management Protocol

---

*Sharon Dolman*  
*Nurse Epidemiologist*  
*Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care*  
*November 25, 2008*



# Overview of Presentation

---

- Purpose
- Requirements Listed in Standard
- Protocol Highlights
- Cross References
- Supporting Documentation
- Highlights/Discussion
- Questions & Answers
- Acknowledgements
- Contact Information

# Purpose

---

- The purpose of this Protocol is to provide direction to boards of health, and to promote standardized practices, with respect to the required assessment of the immunization status of school pupils, including processes associated with issuing suspensions, and the assessment of the immunization status of children in licensed day nurseries.

# Requirements Listed in Standard

---

## Standard

- **Vaccine Preventable Diseases Standard**

## Requirements

- Requirement #1: The board of health shall assess, maintain records and report, where applicable, on: the immunization status of children enrolled in licensed child care programs as defined in the *Day Nurseries Act*, the immunization status of children attending schools in accordance with the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*, and Immunizations administered at board of health-based clinics as required in accordance with the *Immunization Management Protocol, 2008* (or as current) and the *Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2008* (or as current).

## Requirements Listed in Standard

---

- Requirement #13: The board of health shall comply with the *Immunization Management Protocol, 2008* (or as current), that specifies the process for the assessment of the immunization status of children in licensed day nurseries as defined in the *Day Nurseries Act* and the enforcement of the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*.

# Protocol Highlights

---

1. Assessment of the immunization status of school pupils and the school suspension process
  - The board of health (BOH) requests immunization information from the parent/guardian.
  - Immunization record is entered into the Immunization Record Information System (IRIS).
  - Students overdue or with incomplete immunization record are notified through the questionnaire/suspension process.
2. Assessing and maintaining immunization records
  - The BOH shall annually assess the immunization record of all school pupils.
  - Maintain policies and procedures with regard to the school pupil immunization assessment and suspension processes.

# Protocol Highlights

---

3. Orders for the suspension of a school pupil
  - The board of health provides the contact information of a designated board of health staff person to the school principal or director of education.
  - If immunization information is received within 20 school days the suspension order is rescinded and IRIS is updated.
  - The board of health shall maintain statistical information on school suspensions in the health unit and create a summary of suspensions for each school year.
4. Order of exclusion for an outbreak or risk of an outbreak of a designated disease
  - Upon notification of an outbreak or threat of an outbreak of a designated disease at a school, the BOH shall assess the immunization records of students.

# Protocol Highlights

---

## 5. Exemptions

- The board of health shall maintain medical exemption records of students for a designated disease and maintain statement(s) of conscience or religious belief affidavits.

## 6. Assessment of the immunization status of children in licensed day nurseries

- Operators of licensed day nurseries receive annual recommendations from the medical officer of health.
- Board of health shall assess and maintain records of the immunization status of attendees of all licensed day nurseries annually.

## Protocol Highlights

---

7. Exclusions in relation to licensed day nurseries for an outbreak or risk of an outbreak of a designated disease
  - Upon notification of an outbreak or threat of an outbreak of a designated disease, the BOH shall immediately assess the immunization status of day care attendees.
8. Exemptions under the *Day Nurseries Act*
  - Enter exemptions in IRIS.
9. Coverage reports
  - Annual reports or as specified.

# Cross References

---

- None

## Supporting Documentation

---

- Immunization Management Best Practice and Guidance document (to be developed).

## Highlights/Discussion

---

### **New Board of Health requirements:**

- The new requirement does not specify the vaccines for children enrolled in a licensed child care program, but refers to the *Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules* for Ontario as current.

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q. If a school pupil came to a school with no proof of an immunization record and the health unit could not access a record from a previous country, doctor's office or province/state, would you recommend they re-start the schedule or would you have the parent sign an affidavit to have on file?**

**A.** Some cases may need to be assessed on an individual basis and should be discussed with the Medical Officer of Health (MOH). The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends that children born out of the country with no immunization record should be started on the routine immunization schedule for Ontario according to their age.[\[1\]](#)

- **Q. What does it mean to document all phone and/or mail contacts with the parent/guardian/student on the student's immunization record? Does this mean on a memo in IRIS or on an actual chart or medical record?**

**A.** Document in the IRIS memo field. Document the exceptions, e.g., if the immunization information is not provided and what was done about it. This kind of direction can be included in a Best Practice document.

- [\[1\]](#) Canadian Paediatric Society. Children and Youth New to Canada: a Health Care Guide. Health Canada. 1999.

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q. Is there a gap between the two 20 day periods while the second notification is in the mail or should the second notification be mailed before the first 20 days is up?**

**A.** If the student is on the last day of the suspension and the immunization information has not been provided to the board of health, the MOH can consider issuing another suspension order. However, if there is no response to the suspension order close to the 20 days, the health unit may consider working with the school to assist the student to complete the required immunization and get back to school as quickly as possible, otherwise the suspension order should be renewed immediately.

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q. Can we request student numbers? Is a student number only given to one student for their whole duration of their school attendance? Can it be prefixed with abbreviation of various provinces ON, BC, PQ etc to be nationally acceptable?**

**A.** Ontario Education Numbers (OENs) are alternate identifiers for students, assigned by the Ministry of Education. These identifiers are unique and may currently be more reliable than the Health Card Number (HCN) as a student identifier for purposes of school immunization.

The Ministry of Education indicates that Boards of Education cannot release OENs due to restrictions in the *Education Act*. *The Education Act (sec. 266(2.1))* also defines the specific data that must be provided to Public Health Units (PHUs) by school boards.

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q. Can we change the wording to reflect the following: “shall be notified by the MOH or AMOH or designate”?**  
**A.** No, this is a legal document and needs to align with the ISPA.
- **Q. What kind of exemption is required for an adolescent who is pregnant and needs an MMR?**  
**A:** The health unit requires a temporary medical exemption for the student.
- **Q: Why are there no target coverage rates for various age groups and antigens?**  
**A.** The performance measures are being developed by the Performance Management Working Group.

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q: What is meant whenever the word “assess” is used?**

**A:** A definition of assess has been added to the glossary of the Protocol.

“Assess” means the systematic collection and analysis of data (immunization records) in order to provide a basis for decision-making.

Source: Institute of Medicine Committee for the Study of the Future of Public Health. *The Future of Public Health*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1988. Retrieved January 17, 2008 from <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=03039038308&page=141>

- **Q: Are you requiring that all records be reviewed and the legislation be enforced for all students every year?**

**A:** Yes, as required under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA).

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q. Are you requiring that all records be reviewed and the legislation be enforced for all students every year?**

**A.** Yes, as required under the ISPA.

- **Q. What does the word “assist” mean as in "Assist the licensed day nursery operator in maintaining immunization records on all attendees". Specify if this means onsite visits or how much assistance?**

**A.** This kind of detail could be addressed in the Best Practice document because the amount of assistance required would depend on the operator.

## Questions & Answers

---

- **Q. If they have only one dose of measles on file, are they at risk? Should they be excluded?**

**A.** School pupils are required to have received two doses of measles containing vaccine, so if they have only had one dose of measles-containing vaccine they should be excluded until the second dose is given.

- **Q. Can a BOH advise the licensing ministry/program advisor when a day nursery operator is not in compliance with the medical officer of health's immunization recommendations and not in compliance with the DNA with regards to obtaining immunization records prior to admission to a licensed day nursery?**

**A.** Yes

- **Any additional questions?**

# Acknowledgements

---

- Donna Kalailieff, Niagara Regional Area Health Unit
- Lesley Rintche, Waterloo Health Unit
- Laurie Stanford, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Dr. Cathy Whiting, North Bay Parry Sound Health Unit
  
- Infectious Diseases Branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Public Health Standards Branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

# Contact Information

---

For further inquiries, please contact:

- Sharon Dolman, Nurse Epidemiologist, Infectious Diseases Branch
  - Telephone: 416-327-7417
  - E-mail: [sharon.dolman@ontario.ca](mailto:sharon.dolman@ontario.ca)