



Student Immunization Program

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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is statutorily obligated to oversee a student immunization program as part of the state's efforts to eliminate certain diseases.¹ The program includes vaccination requirements for all students admitted to any elementary, middle, junior, or senior high school, including a private school, or into any childcare center or nursery school.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

State law requires a student or responsible adult to present proof of required vaccinations within 30 days after the date of the student's admission to the school or childcare center. Students are required to be immunized against the following diseases at various times throughout their schooling:²

- Any combination of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough) ("DTP/DTaP/DT/Td/Tdap").
- Hepatitis B ("Hep B").
- Haemophilus influenzae type b ("Hib") (this is not the annual influenza vaccine).
- Measles, mumps, and rubella ("MMR").
- Pneumococcal diseases ("PCV").
- Poliomyelitis ("polio").
- Varicella (chickenpox) ("var").
- Meningococcal disease ("Mening").³

A number of the diseases requiring vaccination are listed in the statutes, and the statutes authorize DHS to identify additional diseases requiring vaccination by promulgating an administrative rule. A health care provider may also recommend additional immunizations, such as vaccination against seasonal influenza or COVID-19, that are not currently required under the student immunization program. Any additional vaccines may be required as part of the program only by legislation or by promulgation of an administrative rule.⁴

WAIVERS

Vaccination requirements may be waived if the student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian submits a written statement objecting to the immunization for reasons of health, religion, or personal conviction. A school must inform the responsible adult, in writing, of the right to a waiver at the time that it notifies the person of the student immunization requirements. If the student is an adult, the notice must be provided directly to the student, and the student may submit the objection.⁵

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Starting on the 31st day of school, certain schools must exclude a student who does not have the required immunizations and for whom a signed waiver has not been submitted. In particular, for grades kindergarten to six, if a private school or school district's level of compliance either through immunization or waiver from the previous school year was less than 99 percent, a student who does not have the required immunizations and for whom a signed waiver has not been submitted is not permitted to attend the school. If the exclusion is not resolved within 10 days, certain procedural requirements

apply. If a private school or school district’s compliance level is at or above 99 percent, exclusion is not required. Exclusion is also not required for grades 7 to 12.⁶

In addition, if a substantial outbreak of one of the diseases identified in the student vaccination requirements occurs, DHS may order a school or childcare center to exclude students who are not immunized until the outbreak subsides. A “substantial outbreak” generally means that the occurrence of the disease meets the threshold determined by DHS using epidemiological factors such as time and place.⁷

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

DHS maintains the Wisconsin Immunization Registry to record a person’s immunizations. Access to the registry is limited to the person, health care providers, schools, childcare centers, public health departments, and parents or guardians. More information on the registry is available at DHS, [Wisconsin Immunization Registry \(WIR\)](#) (January 3, 2023).

Immunization records held by a school are also subject to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (commonly referred to as FERPA). FERPA and the state corollary, the Wisconsin Pupil Records Law, generally require that student records maintained by a public school be kept confidential. The confidentiality requirements are subject to certain exceptions, which allow limited sharing of information to the minimum extent necessary for control and suppression of communicable diseases.⁸

IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

The following schedule shows typical requirements if immunizations are begun at five months. However, this schedule may be adjusted depending on the age a child enters day care or school and is subject to other exceptions.

Age/Grade	Required Immunization (and Number of Doses)							
5 months to 15 months	DTP/DTaP/DT (2)	Polio (2)			Hep B (2)	Hib (2)	PCV (2)	
16 months to 23 months	DTP/DTaP/DT (3)	Polio (2)	MMR (1)		Hep B (2)	Hib (3)	PCV (3)	
2 years to 4 years	DTP/DTaP/DT (4)	Polio (3)	MMR (1)	Var (1)	Hep B (3)	Hib (3)	PCV (3)	
Kindergarten to grade 6	DTP/DTaP/DT (4)	Polio (4)	MMR (2)	Var (2)	Hep B (3)			
Grade 7 to grade 11	DTP/DTaP/DT (4) and Tdap booster (1)	Polio (4)	MMR (2)	Var (2)	Hep B (3)			Mening (1)
Grade 12	DTP/DTaP/DT (4) and Tdap booster (1)	Polio (4)	MMR (2)	Var (2)	Hep B (3)			Mening (2)

Source: [Section DHS Table 144.03–A](#), Wis. Adm. Code.

¹ s. [252.04 \(1\)](#), Stats.

² s. [252.04 \(2\)](#), Stats. See DHS, [School Immunization Requirements: Kindergarten – Sixth Grades, 7th Grade, 12th Grade](#), and [Child Care Immunization Assessment](#).

³ Meningococcal disease was added by [CHR 19-079](#). The requirement went into effect February 1, 2023, and was temporarily suspended by the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules from March 9, 2023, to April 15, 2024.

⁴ Rulemaking procedures are subject to legislative oversight. [ss. [227.19](#) and [227.24](#), Stats.] For more information, see Legislative Council, [Administrative Rulemaking](#), Information Memorandum (July 12, 2024).

⁵ s. [252.04 \(3\)](#), Stats.; and ss. [DHS 144.04](#) and [144.05](#), Wis. Adm. Code.

⁶ s. [252.04 \(5\) \(b\)](#), Stats.

⁷ s. [252.04 \(7\)](#), Stats.; and ss. [DHS 144.02 \(21\)](#) and [144.07 \(10\)](#), Wis. Adm. Code.

⁸ ss. [118.125 \(2m\) \(a\)](#) and [146.82 \(5\) \(c\) 3.](#), Stats.