COLORADO
Department of Public Health & Environment
Advancing Colorado's health and protecting the places we live, learn, work and play

Dear parents/guardians of students in Colorado kindergarten - 12th grade schools for the 2020-21 school year:

We know you're thinking of all the things you need to do to make sure your student is ready for school. Getting vaccinated is an important part of their school readiness and keeps children from catching and spreading diseases that can make them sick. We wish you and your student a healthy school year!

Required and recommended vaccines

- Colorado law requires students who attend a public, private, or parochial kindergarten - 12th grade school to be vaccinated against many of the diseases vaccines can prevent, unless an exemption is filed. For more information, visit colorado.gov/cdphe/schoolrequiredvaccines (or cdphe.colorado.gov/schoolrequiredvaccines). Your student must be vaccinated against:
  - diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap)
  - polio (IPV)
  - measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
  - hepatitis B (HepB)
  - varicella (chickenpox)
- Colorado follows recommendations set by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Students entering kindergarten must receive their final doses of DTaP, IPV, MMR and varicella. Students entering 6th grade must receive one dose of Tdap vaccine, even if they are under 11 years of age. You can view recommended vaccine schedules for children 0 - 6 years of age at cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf and preteens/teens 7 - 18 years of age at cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/teen/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs.pdf.
- Vaccines are recommended for hepatitis A, influenza, meningococcal disease and human papillomavirus, but are not required.

Exclusion from school

- Your student may be excluded from school if your school does not have an up-to-date vaccine record, exemption, or in-process plan for your student on file.
- If someone gets sick with a vaccine-preventable disease or there is an outbreak at your student's school and your student has not received the vaccine for that disease, they may be excluded from school activities. That could mean lost learning time for them and lost work and wages for you. For example, if your student has not received a measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, they may be excluded from school for 21 days after someone gets sick with measles.

Have questions?

- You may want to talk to a healthcare provider licensed to give vaccines or your local public health agency about which vaccines your student needs or if you have questions. You can read about the safety and importance of vaccines at SpreadTheVaxFacts.com, ImmunizeForGood.com, and colorado.gov/cdphe/immunization-education (or cdphe.colorado.gov/immunization-education).

Paying for vaccinations

- If you need help finding free or low-cost vaccines and providers who give them, go to COVax4Kids.org, contact your local public health agency, or call the state health department's Family Health Line at 1-303-692-2229 or 1-800-688-7777. You can find your local public health agency at colorado.gov/cdphe/find-your-local-public-health-agency (or cdphe.colorado.gov/find-your-local-public-health-agency).

Vaccination records

- Please take your student's updated vaccine record to school every time they receive a vaccine.
- Need to find your student's vaccine record? It may be available from the Colorado Immunization Information System. Visit COVaxRecords.org for more information.

Exemptions

- If your student cannot get vaccines because of medical reasons, you must submit an official *Immunization Medical Exemption Form* to your school, signed by a health care provider licensed to give vaccines. You only need to submit this form once, unless your student's information or school changes. You can get the form at colorado.gov/vaccineexemption (or cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccineexemption).
- If you choose not to have your student vaccinated according to the current recommended schedule because of personal belief or religious reasons, you must submit a non-medical exemption to your school. Non-medical exemptions must be submitted annually at every new school year (July 1st through June 30th of the following year). The easiest way to file a personal or religious exemption is by using our online or downloadable non-medical exemption form available at colorado.gov/vaccineexemption (or cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccineexemption).

How's your school doing on vaccinations?

- Some parents, especially those with students who have weakened immune systems, may want to know which schools have the highest percent of vaccinated students. Schools must report immunization and exemption numbers (but not student names or birth dates) to the state health department annually. Immunization and exemption rates can be found at COVaxRates.org.

Please share Page 2 of this letter with your student's health care provider as it provides helpful information about vaccines required for school entry, per Colorado law.

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Dear Colorado health care provider:

Colorado School Entry Immunization Law (25-4-901 et seq, C.R.S) and Colorado Board of Health rule (6 CCR 1009-2) require students who attend a public, private or parochial K - 12 school, licensed child care, preschool, or Head Start program to be vaccinated against many of the diseases vaccines can prevent, or have an exemption on file. For more information, visit, colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/schoolrequiredvaccines (or cdphe.colorado.gov/schoolrequiredvaccines). Students must be vaccinated against:

- diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap)
- polio (IPV)
- measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- hepatitis B (HepB)
- haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- pneumococcal (PCV13)
- varicella (chickenpox)

The number, timing and spacing of the required vaccine doses is set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). To be considered valid, a dose of vaccine must meet both the **minimum age and minimum intervals** as defined by ACIP. You can view the current ACIP vaccine schedule for persons 0 - 18 years of age at cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-child-combined-schedule.pdf. Vaccines are recommended for rotavirus, hepatitis A, influenza, meningococcal disease and human papillomavirus, but are not required for school attendance.

Colorado schools are required to review immunization records for school entry and can only accept valid doses of vaccine. Your patients may receive notification of noncompliance if a dose of vaccine does not meet the minimum age or minimum interval requirements, per the ACIP schedule. There are three ways a student can meet the compliance requirements established by Colorado law:

1) A student is considered fully immunized if he or she has received all doses of school-required vaccines according to the current ACIP schedule. Note: students are required to receive their final doses of DTaP, IPV, MMR and varicella by kindergarten entry and their Tdap by 6th grade entry, even if the student is under 11 years of age.
2) A student is in the process of becoming up-to-date on required vaccines and has a written plan from the parent/guardian on file with the school.
3) The student's health care provider (medical doctor, doctor of osteopathic medicine, advanced practice nurse or delegated physician assistant) has signed an official *Immunization Medical Exemption Form* because of a condition that precludes the student from receiving vaccine(s), or the student (emancipated or 18 years of age or older) or student's parent/guardian has submitted a signed non-medical exemption (religious or personal belief).

If students do not meet at least one of the compliance criteria, they are not permitted to attend school. If you have questions about the student's school immunization requirement, please communicate with the student's school nurse or school representative.

If you have questions about the ACIP immunization schedule, vaccines marked as invalid in your patient's immunization record, or about Colorado School Entry Immunization Law, please contact us at 303-692-2700 or cdphe.dcdimmunization@state.co.us. If you have questions about the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS), please contact us at 303-692-2437 (press 2), 1-888-611-9918 (press 1) or cdphe.ciis@state.co.us.

Other reliable clinical resources include:

- CDC Vaccines & Immunizations - cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm
- CDC's *Epidemiology & Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases* - cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/webinar-epv/index.html
- The Immunization Action Coalition: Ask the Experts - immunize.org/askexperts/
- CDC Experts at the National Immunization Program - nipinfo@cdc.gov or 1-800-CDC-Info (1-800-232-4636)