

# Vaccination Requirements to Attend School in Ontario

## Information for Parents and Guardians

Childcare and school settings are common places for vaccine preventable diseases to spread if immunization rates are low. To help keep kids safe, the law in Ontario requires that children get certain immunizations to attend daycare and school. Algoma Public Health is in the process of reviewing student immunization records and will be implementing processes in accordance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act for the 2023/2024 school year. The following information provided in this letter will give an overview of the steps that will be taken in this process.

## 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 to 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 (whooping cough). Children born after January 1, 2010, are also required to be vaccinated against varicella (chicken pox).

Immunization protects your child from vaccine preventable diseases that can have serious and life-threatening consequences and significantly reduces the risk of outbreaks in schools. In accordance with this law, Algoma Public Health is required to enforce the legislation. Enforcement is conducted through a process where the last step is a suspension order.

Algoma Public Health will send immunization reminders and issue orders to school principals to suspend students if records are incomplete after the deadline.

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

## Who is responsible for reporting immunizations to Algoma Public Health?

It is the parents/guardians' responsibility to report their child's immunizations to Algoma Public Health. Although some health care providers' offices do report children's immunizations, they are not required 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 Algoma Public Health

Parents and guardians of students 15 years of age and younger can access and update their child's immunization record by logging into [www.algomapublichealth.com/icon](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/icon). Students 16 years of age and older can access and update their own records at [www.algomapublichealth.com/icon](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/icon).

**Blind River**  
 P.O. Box 194  
 9B Lawton Street  
 Blind River, ON, P0R 1B0  
 Tel: 705-356-2551  
 TF: 1 (888) 356-2551  
 Fax: 705-356-2494

**Elliot Lake**  
 ELNOS Building  
 302-31 Nova Scotia Walk  
 Elliot Lake, ON, P5A 1Y9  
 Tel: 705-848-2314  
 TF: 1 (877) 748-2314  
 Fax: 705-848-1911

**Sault Ste. Marie**  
 294 Willow Avenue  
 Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 0A9  
 Tel: 705-942-4646  
 TF: 1 (866) 892-0172  
 Fax: 705-759-1534

**Wawa**  
 18 Ganley Street  
 Wawa, ON P0S 1K0  
 Tel: 705-856-7208  
 TF: 1 (888) 211-8074  
 Fax: 705-856-1752

## **When I registered my child for school, I gave a copy of their immunization card to the school. Why do I also need to report the vaccinations directly to Algoma Public Health?**

When a child is first registered at a school, the school may take a copy of the immunization record and send it to us. However, when children receive further vaccinations, these must be reported by parents or guardians. Reporting will ensure students' records are up to date with the vaccinations that are required to attend school.

## **How can I report my child's vaccinations to Algoma Public Health?**

- Email: [immunizations@algomapublichealth.com](mailto:immunizations@algomapublichealth.com)
- Online: the online reporting tool is available at [www.algomapublichealth.com/icon](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/icon)
- In person: bring a copy of your child's immunization record to any of our locations during regular business hours [www.algomapublichealth.com/contact-us](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/contact-us)
- By phone: 705-759-5409
- Fax a copy of your child's record: 705-541-5959
- Mail a copy of your child's record to our address:  
Algoma Public Health Attention: Immunization Program  
294 Willow Avenue Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 0A9

## **Where can my child receive vaccination?**

- Their health care provider
- Walk-in clinics
- Algoma Public Health, 705-759-5409

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

## **Can my child be exempted from vaccination?**

Many serious and deadly diseases can be prevented by vaccines. We encourage parents and guardians to ensure their child is protected against vaccine preventable diseases. This protects not only your children, but other children in their school as well. 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.

Both forms can be downloaded from the Ontario government website at [www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca](http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca). Parents and guardians can contact Algoma Public Health for assistance with this process.

The completed exemption forms must be submitted to Algoma Public Health. For your protection, students who do not have the required vaccinations may be restricted from attending school in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.



### **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 Algoma Public Health. The suspension may be re-issued for additional periods of up to 20 days if the information is not received.

### **Who can parents and guardians speak to for more information?**

Please call our immunization phone line 705-759-5409.