



Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the School Health Team at Algoma Public Health (APH), welcome back to school!

We look forward to our School Health Team being back in the school setting to work towards the common goal of achieving optimal health and well-being for all members of the school community. Our team works with your school community to promote healthy school environments as well as mental health well-being to build self-esteem and resiliency within students. We have identified priority areas such as; healthy relationships, substance use, and nutrition. As the 2024-2025 school year begins, we would like to share a few important reminders and updates.

Screen for Illness & Stay Home When Sick

While there continues to be a risk of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, families and educators can work together to keep the risk as low as possible. One of the most effective ways to keep our schools safe from disease is to stay home when you are sick or experiencing symptoms of illness.

Maintain Up-to-Date Immunizations

Vaccines are a safe and effective way to prevent disease and save lives. APH is working closely with parents and schools to ensure that students in Algoma are up to date with their immunizations. Certain vaccines are mandatory for school attendance in Ontario under the [Immunization of School Pupil's Act \(ISPA\)](#).

These include:

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Polio (available in a combination vaccine)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and, for children born in 2010 or later, Varicella (available in a combination vaccine)
- Meningococcal disease

“Preventing infectious disease is a cornerstone of ensuring a safe school environment. High levels of vaccination contribute to herd immunity which keeps dangerous diseases away from our children,” said Dr. Tuinema, Associate Medical Officer of Health at Algoma Public Health. “For some vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, very high levels of immunization are required to achieve herd immunity due to its strong capability to spread among those who are not vaccinated.”

Report Immunizations to Public Health

Vaccines administered by your child(ren)’s healthcare provider are not automatically reported to APH. Therefore, it is important for parents to share their child(ren)’s immunization records with us. Here are three options for how to report any vaccines received outside of APH to us:

- **Email:** You can email a picture of the vaccine record to immunizations@algomapublichealth.com. Please ensure to include your child’s full name and date of birth in the email.
- **Online:** Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON) allows you to securely submit immunization information online. Visit: www.algomapublichealth.com/ICON
- **Telephone:** Call our Immunization department at 705-759-5409, or your local Algoma Public Health office.

School-Based Immunization Clinics

Every year, grade 7 students are offered 3 vaccines through the school immunization program:

- Hepatitis B
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Meningococcal

This year grade 8 students who missed this opportunity will be offered these vaccines in the school setting. The Meningococcal vaccine is required for attending school, while Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus are not mandatory, but recommended to protect children from these preventable diseases. Public health nurses will be in every school in Algoma this fall to ensure all grade 7/8 students are offered these important vaccines. Parents and guardians should keep an eye out for the consent forms coming home with students.

Students generally become due for their Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap) booster vaccine in high school. School based Tdap clinics will take place later in the school year. Consent forms will be sent home for all students that require this vaccine. For more information on immunizations call your local office at, 705-759-5409, or toll-free at 1-866-892-0172 ext. 5409 or speak with your healthcare provider.

Thank you,
APH School Health Team