

# 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 protect kids, Ontario law requires certain immunizations for daycare and school attendance. Algoma Public Health (APH) is reviewing student immunization records and will follow the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) for the 2024/2025 school year. This letter outlines the steps in the process.

## What is the Immunization of School Pupils Act?

The [Immunization of School Pupils Act, R.S.O. 1990](#) 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 on or after January 1, 2010, are also required to be vaccinated against varicella (chicken pox).

Immunization protects your child from vaccine preventable diseases and helps reduce the risk of outbreaks in schools. In accordance with this law, APH is required to enforce the legislation and enforcement may lead to suspension if necessary.

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

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

Parents/guardians are responsible for reporting their child's immunizations to APH. To meet the requirements, follow these steps:

- Check with their health care provider to ensure their child's immunization record is up to date.
- Share your child's immunization record with Algoma Public Health

Parents/guardians of students 15 and under can update immunization records at [www.algomapublichealth.com/icon](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/icon). Students 16 and older can update their own records at the same site.

### 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 need to report the vaccinations to APH?**

When a child is registered at school, the school may send us their immunization record. Parents/guardians must report any new vaccinations to keep the child's record up to date.

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

- **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, fax or mail:** contact numbers for APH office are listed on the first page.
- **Email:** [records@algomapublichealth.com](mailto:records@algomapublichealth.com) (Please include child's name and date of birth in email). If you are sending personal information by email, be aware that electronic communication is not always secure and can be vulnerable to interception.

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

You can book an appointment with your health care provider. If you do not have one, you can view a list of walk-in clinics providing immunizations on our website as well as upcoming community catch-up clinic across Algoma: [www.algomapublichealth.com/ISPA](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/ISPA)

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

Vaccines can prevent many serious diseases. We encourage parents and guardians to make sure 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/guardians must also complete an education session on immunization.

Parents/ guardians can contact the Immunization Team at APH for help. Students without required vaccinations may be restricted from school during an outbreak.

## **How long can my child be suspended?**

The suspension may last up to 20 school days until records are submitted and approved. If the information is not received, the suspension may be extended for another 20 days.

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

Please call the APH office closest to you:

- Blind River – 705-356-2551
- Elliot Lake – 705-848-2314
- Sault Ste. Marie – 705-759-5409
- Wawa – 705-856-7208