

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-332-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: February 16, 2024

RE: **Enforcement of the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* and Vaccine Special Order Blackout Dates**

QUICK FACTS

- Halton Region Public Health is enforcing the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) for students born in 2006 and 2007 (grades 11 and 12). Students with incomplete immunization records will be suspended from school starting **March 21, until April 19, 2024**, or until Public Health receives the required information.
- Under the ISPA, students are required to have up to date immunization records, or a valid vaccine exemption on file with Public Health, to attend school.
- Families of impacted students are receiving letters that indicate what information they need to submit to Public Health to update the student's immunization record. Information on how to avoid suspension is available at halton.ca/immunize.
- Public Health is holding a limited number of appointment-based Community Immunization Clinics over the next several weeks, for students born in 2006 or 2007. These clinics are prioritized for students who are unable to receive the required vaccines through their regular healthcare provider.
- **There is a blackout period for new special orders of Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine for Halton students born in 2006 and 2007 only.** This blackout period is now in effect for south Halton facilities and will start on February 22 for north Halton facilities. Students requiring this vaccine during the blackout period can be referred to halton.ca/immunize to book an appointment at a Public Health Community Immunization Clinic where their immunization record will be updated at the point of care. Students requiring Men-C-ACYW-135 can also receive HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines at Public Health Community Immunization Clinics, if required. Special orders for students born in 2006 and 2007 will resume on April 1, 2024.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Your office may experience an increase in requests for immunization or to obtain vaccine records as parents receive suspension letters from Public Health. Please ask families to bring this letter with them to your office for any vaccine appointments (see sample letter "Order of Suspension" attached).
- Ensure you have an adequate supply of routine childhood vaccines to provide to your patients that require these immunizations, especially those born in 2006 and 2007.
- **Immunize your patients whenever possible** – Public Health clinics are limited and are prioritized for students who cannot get immunized elsewhere. **Encourage parents to report any vaccine their child receives to Public Health by visiting halton.ca/immunize.**
- **Important considerations for immunization record assessment:**
 - Men-C-ACYW-135 vaccine (Menactra or Nimenrix) is required for students born in 2005 to 2011. These students should **not** receive Men-C-C (Menjugate or NeisVacC).
 - **Live vaccines must be given after the first birthday.** Additionally, if not given on the same day, live vaccines must be administered at least 28 days apart, or the second dose will be considered invalid.

- Some students may be eligible for medical exemptions based on serologic immunity, clinical diagnosis of disease or a true vaccine contraindication. The [Statement of Medical Exemption form](#) must be filled out by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- For families who decline or refuse one more of the vaccines required under the ISPA, information on how to access a non-medical exemption is available at halton.ca/immunize
- Healthcare providers can call 311 and ask to speak to an Immunization Nurse if they have questions about student immunization records or medical exemptions.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS

- Immunization is the best way to protect your child, family, and community from life-threatening diseases.
- Parents/guardians must report all vaccines administered by a primary healthcare provider to Halton Region Public Health. The ISPA requires that students have up to date immunization records to attend school.
- Students may have already received the required vaccines during childhood, and the records only need to be reported to Public Health (the student may not need any additional immunizations).
- Families who object to immunization due to personal choice must obtain a non-medical vaccine exemption.
- Parents/guardians and students can visit halton.ca/immunize or call 311 to report immunization records, to get more information about vaccine exemptions, or to book a Public Health Community Immunization Clinic Appointment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario](#).
- [ISPA Resource Guide for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [Ordering Vaccines through Public Health](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (including positive TB skin test results) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES

IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS HYPERLINKS, PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC UPDATES BY EMAILING DOCTORS@HALTON.CA

Order for Suspension from Attendance at School

Pursuant to s.6 of the Immunization of School Pupils Act

To the Parent/Legal Guardian of, and Student if 16 or 17 Years of Age:

Student Name
123 Place Drive
Oakville, Ontario
H0H 0H0

To the Principal of:

Halton Region Public School

Student Name

D.O.B. 2007 Jan 01

Ontario Immunization ID: ABCDEFGHIJ

I, Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health for The Regional Municipality of Halton, order the suspension of the above-named student for a period of twenty school days,

From: March 21, 2024, to April 19, 2024

This order will be cancelled where circumstances for making the order no longer exist, including:

- i. Where the student reaches the age of 18 during the above-noted suspension period, as of that birth date anniversary.
- ii. Where the student completes the prescribed program of immunization as indicated in 1(a), or where a valid vaccine exemption is obtained for the student, and proof is received by Halton Region Public Health. Proof can be provided by visiting halton.ca/immunize, by calling 311, or by delivering documents in-person to Halton Region Public Health at 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, ON, L6M 3L1.

The reasons for this order are:

1. I have not received one of the following for the above-named student:
 - a) A statement that the student has completed the prescribed program of immunization in relation to:
Diphtheria, Measles, Meningococcal disease (Men-C-ACYW-135), Mumps, Pertussis, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus
 - OR**
 - b) An unexpired statement of medical exemption, OR
 - c) A further medical exemption to replace one that has expired, OR
 - d) A valid non-medical vaccine exemption (statement of conscience or religious belief - affidavit required) and confirmation the required vaccine education session was completed.
2. I am not satisfied that the student has completed, has commenced, and will complete, or will commence and complete the prescribed program of immunization in relation to the disease(s) indicated above.

NOTICE: The parent/legal guardian or student, where the student is 16 or 17 years old, is entitled to a hearing by the Health Services Appeal and Review Board if the parent/legal guardian or student mails or delivers to me, and the Health Services Appeal and Review Board, 151 Bloor St. West, 9th Floor, Toronto, ON, M5S 1S4, and the Principal of **Halton Region Public School**, a request for a hearing, within 15 days of this notice being served.

Even though a hearing by the Health Services Appeal and Review Board may be requested, this order takes effect when it is served.

Dr. Joanna Oda
Associate Medical Officer of Health
The Regional Municipality of Halton

Date served: **February 15, 2024**