



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TO: Chief School Administrators/Charter School Lead Persons
Non Public School Administrators
Private School for the Disabled Administrators

FROM: Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

SUBJECT: DHSS IMMUNIZATION ALERT

As the new school year begins, it has come to the department's attention that some districts are excluding students from school who lack documentation of required immunizations. The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is concerned about this practice and has developed the statement below as guidance for district administrators. DHSS has asked the department to disseminate this message on its behalf. Any questions regarding immunization practices or requirements should be directed to DHSS at (609) 588-7512.

In light of the 4 new vaccination requirements for the 2008-2009 school year (influenza and pneumococcal vaccine for childcare and preschool facilities and meningococcal and Tdap for 6th Grade), the State Vaccine Preventable Disease Program is allowing 2 weeks for any student who is noncompliant to produce the documented doses or provide an appointment slip showing that they are in the process of receiving immunizations. If the appointment falls outside of the 2 weeks, an additional 2 weeks may be allowed (total of 30 days) for the student to come into compliance. If the provider practice cannot meet the demand to vaccinate within the grace period, then an appointment slip showing when the next available appointment the student will be able to receive the vaccine will be sufficient. The Department's goal is not to exclude anyone, but if the child does not receive the vaccine in a reasonable period, he/she will be asked to leave school. This grace period is intended for the 2008-2009 school year only.

Students must be age eligible to receive the new vaccine requirements. The State Vaccine Preventable Disease Program is not promoting off label use of any vaccines. If a student's birthday is after the start of the school year, he/she can wait until they are age eligible (i.e. 10 year old in 6th grade with a DOB 10/31/XX, will receive the Meningococcal and Tdap vaccines once he/she turns 11). They will have the same 2 week grace period as everyone else where they have to produce the documented doses or an appointment slip showing that they are in the process of receiving immunizations. If the appointment falls outside of the 2 weeks, an additional 2 weeks may be allowed (total of 30 days) for the student to come into compliance.

An immunization guidance grid is available on-line at <http://nj.gov/health/forms/imm-7.pdf> for easy reference of all of the required immunizations.