

# THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

No. 203

Section: 200 Pupils

Title: Immunizations and  
Communicable Diseases

Adopted: December 21, 2011

Revised: January 27, 2022

## 203 IMMUNIZATIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

### **Purpose**

The Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to making every school a safe, welcoming, and healthy place. The purpose of this policy is to set requirements for immunizations in order to safeguard the School District of Philadelphia (“District”) community from the spread of certain communicable diseases.

### **Authority**

As required by the Public School Code and Pennsylvania Department of Health regulations, the Board requires all students, parents/guardians, and District staff to comply with the immunization requirements established in this policy and administrative procedures. [1][2]

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Board directs the Superintendent or their designee, through the Office of Student Support Services, to develop administrative procedures to implement this policy. Such procedures shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Delineation at the central office and school level of the responsibility for implementing and enforcing the components of this policy and its administrative procedures [1];
2. Communication protocols schools must follow, relevant to immunizations, exemptions, exclusions from school, and outbreaks of communicable diseases, in accordance with health and safety guidance from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health;
3. Requirements to provisionally admit, exempt, or exclude students who do not have the required immunizations, or who have been diagnosed with or are suspected of having certain diseases and/or infectious conditions that require exclusion from school; and
4. Steps schools must take and standards schools must apply in determining whether and under what circumstances to provisionally admit or exclude students.

The Superintendent or designee through, the Office of Student Support Services, shall:

1. Annually, or whenever necessary, review state and municipal standards for immunization and direct the responsible central office or school personnel to implement any changes accordingly.
  2. Investigate and implement District-sponsored programs of immunization that may be warranted to safeguard the health of the school community. Such programs may be conducted in cooperation with local health agencies.
  3. Track and monitor school nurse compliance with reporting immunization data for the School Immunization Law Report to the Pennsylvania Department of Health annually.
- [3]

## **Mandatory Regulatory Procedures**

### **Immunization**

All students shall be immunized against specific diseases in accordance with state and municipal law and regulations, unless specifically exempt or provisionally admitted in accordance with the administrative procedures to this policy. [1][2][4][5][6][7][8][9]

Students attending child care group settings located in a school, a pre-kindergarten program, or an early intervention program operated by the District shall be immunized in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Students in District-run Head Start and pre-kindergarten programs must provide proof of immunization within 60 days of enrollment. [5][10][11]

### **Exemptions from Immunization Requirements**

Students may be exempt from immunization requirements, in accordance with state law and regulations, as outlined in the administrative procedures to this policy. [1][7]

The Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health may also issue a temporary waiver of immunization requirements in the following circumstances:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States Department of Health and Human Services, recognizes a nationwide shortage of supply for a particular vaccine; or
- In the event of a disaster impacting the ability of children transferring into a school to provide immunization records. [4]

### **Provisional Admission**

#### *Exemptions*

If permitted by law or regulation, a student shall be exempt from immunization requirements whose parent/guardian objects in writing to such immunization on religious grounds, or on strong moral or philosophical grounds that rise to the level of religious belief, or whose physician certifies in writing that the student's current medical condition contraindicates immunization. [1][5][6][7]

### *Students Experiencing Homelessness*

Students experiencing homelessness who have not been immunized or are unable to provide immunization records due to homelessness shall be admitted in accordance with the provisions of applicable laws and regulations. [12]

### *Students in Foster Care*

Students in foster care shall be admitted in accordance with law and regulations and have thirty (30) days from the first day of attendance at a school in the District to provide proof of immunization compliance, to provide a medical certificate detailing the plan to complete a multiple dose vaccine services, or to satisfy the requirements for an exemption. [13]

### *Transferring Students*

Students transferring into the District have thirty (30) days from the day of enrollment in the District to provide proof of immunization compliance, to provide a medical certificate detailing the plan to complete a multiple dose vaccine series, or to satisfy the requirements for an exemption.

### Nonimmunized Children

Students who are missing one or more doses of a vaccine required for attendance at school shall not be permitted to attend District schools unless an exemption applies or the student is provisionally admitted. [4][14][15]

The District may exclude from school any student who is not properly immunized during an outbreak of a communicable disease against which the student has not been immunized regardless of an otherwise applicable exemption.

### Communicable Diseases

Students who have been diagnosed with or are suspected by their physician of having certain diseases and/or infectious conditions shall be excluded from school for the period indicated by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Philadelphia Department of Public Health for specified diseases. [11][16][17][18]

Parents/Guardians shall be notified of this policy at the beginning of the school year, and that during the school year it may be necessary for a student to be excluded from school due to communicable disease.

Parents/Guardians of a student needing to be excluded shall be notified and required to come to school or have a designated emergency contact come to school to transport the student home or to an appropriate place of care. Students may return to school when the criteria for readmission following a communicable disease, as set forth in law, regulations, or guidance from the state or the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, have been met. [19][20][21]

The Board directs school staff to request emergency contact information from parents/guardians of students at the beginning of each school year and request that it be updated as necessary during the school year.

The Office of Student Health Services shall report the presence of suspected communicable diseases to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Philadelphia Department of Public Health. [19][20][21][22]

The Superintendent or designee shall direct that health guidelines and universal precautions designed to minimize the transmission of communicable diseases be implemented in District schools.

Instruction regarding prevention of communicable and life-threatening diseases shall be provided by the schools in the educational program for all levels, in accordance with state regulations. [23]

Parents/Guardians shall be informed and provided opportunities during school hours to review all curriculum materials used in instruction relative to communicable and life-threatening diseases, in accordance with Board Policy. [23][24][25]

### Health Records

The school shall maintain a certificate of immunization as part of the health record for each student, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and in accordance with District policies. [4]

A comprehensive health record shall be maintained in the Student Information System for each student enrolled in the District. The record shall include the results of required tests, measurements, screenings, regular and special examinations, and medical questionnaires. [26][27]

All health records shall be confidential, and their contents shall be divulged only when necessary for the health of the student or to a physician at the written request of the parent/guardian. [23] The District may disclose information from health records to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency when necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy. [28][29][30][31][32][33][34]

Student health records shall be retained for at least the minimum of two years or what is required by law and in accordance with Board policy. [28][35]

### Communications about Requirements and Resources

The Superintendent or designee, through the Office of Student Support Services, shall inform parents/guardians prior to a student's enrollment and as needed after a student's enrollment of the following: [1][4][5][6][7][14][15]

- The requirements for immunization;
- The acceptable proof of immunization;
- Available exemptions and means by which such exemptions may be claimed;
- Resources available in the community to assist with immunizations; and
- Potential consequences for failure to comply with immunization requirements.

**Legal References:**

1. [24 P.S. § 1303a](#)
2. [28 PA Code § 23.81 et seq.](#)
3. [28 Pa. Code § 23.86](#)
4. [28 PA Code § 23.85](#)
5. [28 Pa. Code § 23.83](#)
6. [22 Pa. Code § 11.20](#)
7. [28 Pa. Code § 23.84](#)
8. [School Immunization Information](#)
9. [Philadelphia Code of Ordinance Title 6, Sections 6-210](#)
10. [28 Pa. Code § 27.77](#)
11. [28 Pa. Code § 27.71](#)
12. [Policy 251](#) - Students Experiencing Homelessness
13. [Policy 255](#) - Educational Stability for Students in Foster Care
14. [Policy 200](#) - Enrollment of Students
15. [Policy 201](#) - Admission of Students
16. [28 Pa. Code § 27.72](#)
17. [Policy 204](#) - Attendance
18. [Philadelphia Code of Ordinance Title 6, Sections 6-204](#)
19. [28 Pa. Code § 27.1](#)
20. [28 Pa. Code § 27.2](#)
21. [28 Pa. Code § 27.23](#)
22. [28 Pa. Code § 27.21a](#)
23. [22 Pa Code § 4.29](#)
24. [22 Pa. Code § 4.4](#)
25. [Policy 105.1](#) - Curriculum Review by Parents/Guardians and Students
26. [24 P.S. § 14-1402](#)
27. [Policy 209](#) - Health Examinations/Screenings
28. [24 P.S. § 14-1409](#)
29. [20 U.S.C. 1232g](#)
30. [34 CFR Part 99](#)
31. [Policy 113.4](#) - Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information
32. [Policy 216](#) - Student Records
33. [Policy 805](#) - Emergency Preparedness
34. [Policy 105.2](#) - Exemption from Instruction
35. [Policy 800](#) - Records Management

**Related Information:**

[55 Pa. Code § 3270.131](#)

[55 Pa. Code § 3270.136](#)

[55 Pa. Code § 3270.137](#)

[Philadelphia Department of Public Health Guidance - Immunization Requirements for School Entry](#)