

Required Immunization of School Children

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide standards to the regional health authorities (RHAs) regarding the requirements to comply with Sections 12(1) and 12(3) of the *Reporting and Diseases Regulation 2009-136* under the *Public Health Act* pertaining to children entering New Brunswick schools for the first time.

Preamble: Since 1982, New Brunswick legislation has required proof of immunization against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus and polio as a condition of school entry. This legislation supports the *Policy 706-Immunization Proof* from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Each department collaborates to ensure immunization requirements are in place to assure the maximum level of disease protection afforded by vaccines. A requirement at the time of school entry provides a “catch-up” opportunity for all those children not immunized in early infancy and is an adjunct to the voluntary immunization program

In November 2009, the *Public Health Act* was proclaimed. This legislation has expanded the requirements for those children entering New Brunswick schools for the first time to include proof of immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, measles, rubella, mumps, varicella, and meningococcal disease.

Changes to the requirements are the result of advancements in the science of vaccine preventable diseases, the availability of new vaccines and the inclusion of these vaccines into the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule.

Exemptions from legislated immunization requirements are permitted for medical reasons or if the parent or legal guardian objects to immunization.

In New Brunswick publicly funded vaccines are documented in the provincial system, Public Health Information Solution (PHIS). PHIS is a secure, integrated comprehensive, repository of up-to-date immunization information that facilitates the management and delivery of publicly funded immunizations in New Brunswick.

Policy: The immunization status of all children entering New Brunswick schools for the first time will be assessed to ensure proof of immunization and provide a catch-up opportunity for all those children not immunized in early infancy. (“School” as defined by the *Education Act*).

Standards:

The Regional Health Authority, Public Health (RHA PH) service will generate PHIS reports at the beginning of each school year and in the event, there are students in kindergarten who have not received the required immunizations or do not present an Exemption form, a second verification report will be provided to the school after the 120 days as per policy 706. The immunization status for children entering a New Brunswick school for the first time will also be provided by RHA PH when notified by the school of a new student from out of province as these individuals may not appear in the PHIS report that has been provided at the time of the verifications. The RHA PH can use this report to inform their immunization program planning and implementation of required PH measures. Here is the link for the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for “[School Entry Vaccine Coverage Reporting Process Using the Public Health Information Solution](#)”.

Although not required for the purposes of this policy, immunization records of school aged children may be assessed as part of a communicable disease response.

1. Proof of immunization will be determined by examination of the child's immunization record through a report generated in the Public Health Information Solution (PHIS). The report provides immunization status for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella and meningococcal disease as per the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule, or as per a prescribed schedule for those not immunized in early infancy AND in conjunction with the current eligibility criteria for publicly funded vaccine.
2. Acceptable schedules for those not immunized in early infancy are those prescribed by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and described in the most current edition of the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

3. Proof of immunization is not required if the child's parent or legal guardian provides:
 - a. A medical exemption signed by a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner, on a form provided by the Minister. All medical exemptions must be entered in PHIS by regional Public Health.
 - b. A written statement of his or her objections to the immunization(s) required by the Minister signed by the parent or legal guardian on a form provided by the Minister. All parental objections must be entered in PHIS by regional Public Health.
4. A copy of immunization or an *Immunization Exemption Form for School Entry* signed by the parent/legal guardian will be provided to the Public Health Nurse (PHN) by the principal of the school. The PHN will upload the exemption form in the child's context document from PHIS and add a comment into the special consideration section.
5. In the event a child has not received the required immunizations and does not present an Immunization Exemption Form for School Entry, the child's immunizations will be initiated within 120 days (as listed in policy 706) and be completed according to the schedule prescribed by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and described in the most current edition of the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).
6. Relevant sections of *Public Health Act* and the Reporting and Diseases Regulation- Immunization of Children, can be found through the Intranet under Acts and Regulations or directly at this link: [Reporting and Diseases: Public Health Act](#).
7. Relevant sections of *Education Act* Section 10(1) & 10(2) can be found through the Intranet under the Acts and Regulations or directly at this link: [Education Act](#)
The Department of Education's Policy 706, outlines Education's role in Required Immunization and can be found at this link: [Policy 706-Proof of immunization](#).
8. Public Health NB (surveillance branch) will use PHIS to produce an annual Immunization Coverage report.