

Immunization Program: Nebraska School Immunization Laws

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have immunization requirements for children entering school. In Nebraska, children cannot attend classes in public or private school until the school has written proof of their immunization status.

To attend school, children in Nebraska are required to be immunized against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)

Each school in Nebraska is required to keep the immunization history of the students enrolled on file. Parents or guardians must present one of the following documents to the school to verify immunization status:

- An immunization record showing that the child is protected by age-appropriate immunizations.
- A statement signed by a physician that the required immunization would be injurious to the student or members of the student's family or household.
- An affidavit signed by a legally authorized representative stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is a member.
- According to state statute, the board of education, school board, or governing authority shall assure that all school children are appropriately immunized prior to attending classes. Violation of these requirements is a Class V misdemeanor. Immunization requirements are not unique to Nebraska. All 50 states specify immunization and/or waiver requirements for school attendance. Reference documents and reporting forms can be found at:
http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/immunization_forms.aspx

Immunization records must be maintained on all students, but information on only three groups needs to be reported: students entering school for the first time (kindergarten or 1st grade); 7th graders; and all out-of-state transfer students (including foreign exchange students).

Things to keep in mind:

1. Exemptions: For Nebraska students, there are two exemptions to the immunizations requirements that may be submitted in lieu of the required dates of immunization:

- A statement signed by a licensed medical physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner, stating that the specified immunization would be injurious to the student or to a member of the student's household. This does not include chiropractic physicians.
- A notarized affidavit stating that immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of the student's religious beliefs.
- Students with exemptions on file may need to be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

2. Varicella (Chickenpox): If the student has not had the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine but has had the varicella (chickenpox) disease then a statement signed by a licensed medical physician, parent, or guardian must be submitted verifying the name of the student and the year in which he/she had the disease.

3. Provisional Enrollment: Some immunizations call for multiple doses of vaccine. For students who have not completed all doses required, state statute allows them to be provisionally enrolled in school if they have received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines prior to enrollment and continue to get the remaining shots as rapidly as is medically feasible. This means that school staff will need to track progress toward the completion of the required immunizations. Vaccine series do not need to be restarted if the child has a documented immunization record, even if it has been a long time since the last dose, just have the child finish the series.

- Anyone who was provisionally enrolled during a previous school year must now be fully immunized or have an exemption on file before attending classes during the 2013-2014 school years. Students in grades K-12 and all out of state transfers are covered by the updated rules and regulations and should have documentation on file for 3 DTaP, 3 Polio, 2 MMR, 2 Varicella, 3 Hepatitis B doses and Seventh Graders are required to provide documentation for Tdap.
- A student can be provisionally enrolled in school if he or she has started the immunizations series and continues the necessary immunizations as rapidly as is medically possible. If the student doesn't continue with the immunization schedule, he or she will be sent home.
- The school district is required by law to report the immunization status of each school to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services yearly. The current level of school immunization is 97.06% in Nebraska. For complete information, please refer to Title 173 of the Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 3: Rules and Regulations Relating to School Health, Communicable Disease Control, and Physical Examination and Immunization Standards.
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