



Office of the
Washington
State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Student Immunization Records

Resources and leading
practices to help schools
and districts meet state
requirements



Practices to overcome barriers to vaccination and increase compliance rates

A recent performance audit looked at practices school districts and schools in Washington said they used to improve their compliance rates and address vaccination barriers. Given the limited scope of the audit, this is not an exhaustive list of successful practices. Nonetheless, they may be useful to districts and schools when they consider improving their own policies and procedures around immunization records.

Actively help parents understand Washington's immunization requirements

1. Give parents complete information about immunization compliance requirements

- Explain that Washington requires all schools to collect an immunization record from every child when enrolling in kindergarten or entering a new school for the first time.
- **Start with the bottom line:** Tell parents the law requires you to exclude any child that lacks proof of immunization or exemption from school.
- **Tell them all their options: Choosing an exemption, providing results of a titer test or a schedule of immunization.** Make sure parents understand the types of documents your school can accept to comply with state law: a certificate of immunization or a certificate of exemption. These documents might be accompanied by results of a titer test signed by a healthcare professional or a schedule of immunization. Explain how parents can obtain conditional entry to school for their child by working with you to agree on a schedule of vaccinations.

2. Speak their language: Use tools and languages that reach the district's population. Give them information about vaccinations and requirements using translated materials from the Department of Health's website.

3. Tell them early and often: Start well before the new school year starts and continue year round.

- Make immunization compliance and documentation a year-round endeavor.
- Talk to parents well before the beginning of school year and keep in touch year round, especially with families that are in conditional status and may need help to stay on track completing vaccinations.

4. Don't hesitate to follow up: Send parents frequent reminders about missing immunization records.

5. Take multiple opportunities to educate parents about immunization requirements

- Have nurses attend kindergarten enrollment or orientation events to talk about the importance of vaccinations and answer questions about compliance requirements.
- Use social media, e-newsletters, radio ads, posters, sandwich boards – whatever works in your community – to remind parents of the importance of vaccinations, legal requirements for student attendance, and what proof of student immunization compliance is needed.

Develop district and school procedures to regularly review and monitor student immunization compliance status

1. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in the student immunization compliance process

- Develop desk procedures for staff involved in the process
- Clarify the process with a calendar of month-to-month tasks

2. Have staff responsible for immunization compliance meet monthly

- Review the immunization status of students to exclude, and develop actions school staff can take to help parents bring children in conditional status into compliance.

3. Notify parents of their child's missing immunization documents

- Send letters or emails, or speak to them directly over the phone or in person
- Develop scripts for office staff to help them answer common questions from parents

4. Work with parents to:

- Understand barriers they encounter when getting vaccinations or obtaining proof of compliance for their children
- Identify possible ways to help parents overcome the barriers

5. Exclude children from attending school when they lack immunization records

Develop appropriate resources to help parents overcome common barriers to getting their children vaccinated

- Schedule a vaccination clinic on campus, at a nearby medical facility, or at the local health authority
- Help parents schedule vaccination appointments for students
- Give parents a list of nearby clinics that offer student vaccinations
- Use the resources already available from DOH, local health jurisdictions and others

Make use of WSSDA's model policies

The Washington State School Directors Association generates leading practices and policies for member schools and districts in Washington. It establishes best practices for compliance enforcement and for a variety of other issues that schools and districts face, and updates those practices in response to changes in state law. Visit its website for details: wssda.org

Compliance and vaccination resources

Materials for schools and school districts

DOH webpage for all WA requirements, manuals and forms: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization/SchoolStatusReporting%209

Additional resources regarding school and child care immunization requirements and reporting: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization

Certificate of immunization (CIS) status forms: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization#cis

How to generate a CIS for a student with vaccination information in the IIS system: doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/348-389-CIS-PrintingInstructions.pdf

Certification of exemption form: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization#exempt

Conditional status FAQ: doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/348-679-ConditionalStatusFAQ.pdf

Templates for conditional status notice letter to parents: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization#conditional

Templates for exclusion notice letter to parents: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization#exclusion

Washington State Immunization Information System (IIS) guidelines: doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/HealthcareProfessionsandFacilities/DataReportingandRetrieval/ImmunizationInformationSystem

Washington IIS School Module: doh.wa.gov/schoolmodule

Immunization records management toolkit: immunitycommunitywa.org/school-toolkit/

Vaccination resources

2019-2020 immunization requirements matrix: doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/348-295-SchoolImmReqforParents2019-2020.pdf

Immunization comparison chart (U.S. and Mexico): cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/binational-schedule-pr.pdf

Vaccination brochures and posters in other languages: doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/FormsandPublications/OtherLanguage

Template letters to parents about MMR legal changes: doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization/ExemptionLawChange

Measles-specific informational flyers in 17 languages: doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Measles/Measles2019#MeaslesInformationFlyers

King County Plain Talk about Childhood Immunizations guides for families: kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/immunization/child/plain-talk-about-childhood-immunizations.aspx

The School Nurse Corps: k12.wa.us/policy-funding/student-health/school-nurse-corps

Setting up an on-campus vaccination site: immunitycommunitywa.org/toolkit-for-schools-and-groups/

Read the full performance audit, **Common Barriers to Compliance with Student Immunization Requirements**, on our website at sao.wa.gov/performance-audit/common-barriers-to-compliance-with-student-immunization-requirements