

## Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 205  
Section: STUDENTS  
Title: IMMUNIZATION AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES  
Date Adopted: 6/19/89  
Date Last Revised: 3/18/19; 7/17/06

### 205 IMMUNIZATION AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

#### Authority

In order to safeguard the school community from the spread of certain communicable diseases, the Board requires that established policy and guidelines be followed.

#### Definitions

**Certificate of immunization** - The official form furnished by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The certificate is filled out by the parent/guardian or health care provider and signed by the health care provider, public health official or school nurse or a designee. The certificate is given to the school as proof of full immunization. The school maintains the certificate as the official school immunization record or stores the details of the record in a computer database.

**Medical certificate** - The official form furnished by the Pennsylvania Department of Health setting out the immunization plan for a student who is not fully immunized, filled out and signed by a physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant, or by a public health official when the immunization is provided by the Department of Health or a local health department, and given to a school as proof that the student is scheduled to complete the required immunizations.

#### Guidelines

##### *Immunization*

All students shall be immunized against certain diseases in accordance with Pennsylvania law, unless specifically exempt for properly documented religious or medical reasons, or provisionally admitted in accordance with Pennsylvania law and regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Students who do not meet these criteria shall not be permitted to attend District schools. Implementation of immunization requirements shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee and the head nurse.

A student whose parent or guardian objects in writing to such immunization for religious grounds, on the basis of a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief, or whose physician certifies that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child shall be exempt from the requirements for immunization. Chiropractors' certifications for medical exemptions are not acceptable.

A medical exemption for a specific antigen(s) should be documented in the statement of exemption. All other immunizations are still required. A medical exemption to immunization

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requirements shall expire in the event the child's physician determines that such immunizations are no longer detrimental to the health of the child.

Waivers to applicable immunization requirements may be available to students who are homeless or in foster care, in instances where children are unable to locate immunization records due to a disaster if there is a recognized national vaccine shortage, or for children who transfer into the District.

The District may exclude students from school who are not properly immunized because of an applicable exemption during an outbreak of a communicable disease against which the child has not been immunized.

The Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Annually review state standards for immunization and direct accordingly the responsible District personnel.
2. Inform parents and guardians prior to a student's entry to school for the first time of the requirements for immunization, the requisite proof of immunization, the exemption available for religious or medical reasons, and the means by which such exemptions may be claimed.
3. Investigate and recommend to the Board District-sponsored programs of immunization as may be warranted by circumstances and the health of the school community. Any such program is subject to Board approval and should be conducted in cooperation with local health agencies.
4. Annually report required immunization data to the Pennsylvania Department of Health by the required deadline.

### ***Health Records***

The District shall require that prior to a student's admittance to school for the first time, the parent or guardian shall complete a medical history report form that includes information regarding known communicable diseases. The nurse or school physician may use such reports to advise the parent or guardian of the need for further medical care.

The school nurse shall report the presence of suspected communicable diseases to the appropriate local health authority as required by the Department of Health.

All health records shall be confidential, and their contents shall be divulged only when necessary for the health of the student or at the request of the parent or guardian to a

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physician, unless otherwise required by law or regulation. As part of the health record, a certificate of immunization shall be maintained for each student enrolled, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

The District shall require parents or guardians to annually complete a medical history report form that includes information regarding known communicable diseases.

***Attendance***

The Board authorizes that students who have been diagnosed by a physician or who are suspected of having a disease by the school nurse shall be excluded from school for the period indicated by regulations of the Department of Health for certain specified diseases and infectious conditions.

***Education***

Instruction regarding communicable and life-threatening diseases shall be provided by the schools in the educational program for all levels. Parents and guardians shall be provided convenient opportunities to preview all instructional materials used in presentation of this subject.

**Specific Procedures Regarding HIV and Other Blood Borne Pathogens**

Specific procedures to be followed with respect to students infected by blood borne pathogens, such as Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), are included in the accompanying Administrative Regulation. The Board directs that the established school rules relative to illnesses and other diseases among students shall also apply to students infected with blood borne pathogens. Further, the Board shall not require routine screening tests for blood borne pathogens, including HIV, in the school setting, nor will such tests be a condition for school attendance.

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board on an as-needed basis regarding the effectiveness of procedures regarding students infected by blood borne pathogens and make recommendations for revision in accordance with developments in medical research and/or treatments.

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**Legal References:**

24 P.S. Sections 1303a; 1402; 1409  
22 PA Code Sections 4.4; 4.29  
28 PA Code Sections 23.83; 23.84; 23.85; 27.2; 27.23; 27.71; 27.72  
Board Pol. 103; 105.1; 117; 200; 201; 207; 209; 249; 262  
29 C.F.R. §1910.1030  
35 P.S. §7601 et seq  
42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq  
P.L. 103-3 of 1993