COLORADO
Department of Public Health & Environment

Advancing Colorado's health and protecting the places we live, learn, work and play

Dear parents/guardians of students attending Colorado kindergarten - 12th grade schools for the 2023-24 school year:

We know you're thinking of all the things you need to do to make sure your student is ready for school. Getting vaccinated is an important part of their school readiness and keeps children from catching and spreading diseases that can make them sick and potentially disrupt in-person learning.

Required and recommended vaccines:

- Colorado law requires students who attend a public, private, or parochial Kindergarten - 12th grade school to be vaccinated against many of the diseases vaccines can prevent unless a *Certificate of Exemption* is filed. For more information, visit cdphe.colorado.gov/schoolrequiredvaccines. Your student must be vaccinated against:
    - Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP, Tdap).
    - Hepatitis B (HepB).
    - Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR).
    - Polio (IPV).
    - Varicella (chickenpox).
- Colorado follows recommendations set by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. **Prior to starting Kindergarten**, students must receive their final doses of DTaP, IPV, MMR, and varicella. **Prior to starting sixth grade,** students must receive one dose of Tdap vaccine, even if the student is younger than 11 years. You can view recommended vaccine schedules at: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-easyread.html (birth through 6 years) or www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/adolescent-easyread.html (7 to 18 years).
- CDC also recommends vaccines for COVID-19, hepatitis A (HepA), human papillomavirus (HPV), influenza (flu), and meningococcal disease (MenACWY and MenB), but these are not required for school entry in Colorado.

Exclusion from school

- Your student may be excluded from school if your school does not have an up-to-date *Certificate of Immunization*, *Certificate of Exemption*, or an in-process plan on file for your student.
- If someone gets sick with a vaccine-preventable disease or there is an outbreak at your student's school and your student has not received the vaccine for that disease, they may be excluded from school activities. That could mean lost learning time for them and lost work and wages for you. For example, if your student has not received a MMR vaccine, they may be excluded from school for 21 days after someone gets sick with measles.

Have questions?

Talk with a health care provider or your local public health agency (LPHA) about which vaccines your student needs or if you have questions. You can find a vaccine provider at cdphe.colorado.gov/immunizations/get-vaccinated. You can read about the safety and importance of vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/FAQs.html, childvaccineco.org, ImmunizeForGood.com, and cdphe.colorado.gov/immunization-education. Staying up to date on routine immunizations is important for adults, as well as children. We encourage parents and guardians to find out what vaccines might be due. It's never too late for families to get back on track! Learn more about vaccines for adults at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html.

Paying for vaccinations

If you need help finding free or low-cost vaccines and providers who give them, go to COVax4Kids.org, contact your local public health agency (find LPHA contact information at cdphe.colorado.gov/find-your-local-public-health-agency), or call the Mile High Family Health Line at 303-692-2229 or 1-800-688-7777 to ask about Medicaid contact information and health clinics located in your area.

Vaccination records

- Share your student's updated *Certificate of Immunization* with their school every time they receive a vaccine.
- Need to find your student's vaccine record? It may be available from the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS). Visit COVaxRecords.org for more information, including directions for how to use the CIIS Public

Portal to view and print your student's vaccine record.

Exemptions

- If your student cannot get vaccines because of medical reasons, you must submit a *Certificate of Medical Exemption* to your school, signed by a physician (MD, DO), advanced practice nurse (APN), or delegated physician assistant (PA). You only need to submit this certificate once, unless your student's school or information changes. You can get the form at cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions.
- If you choose not to have your student vaccinated according to Colorado's school vaccine requirements for reasons that are nonmedical, you must submit a *Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption* to your school. Nonmedical exemptions must be submitted annually at every new school year (July 1 through June 30). There are two ways to file a nonmedical exemption.
    1. File the *Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption* WITH the signature from an immunizing provider in Colorado who is a physician (MD, DO), advanced practice nurse (APN), delegated physician's assistant (PA), registered nurse (RN), or pharmacist licensed in Colorado; OR
    2. File the *Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption*, which you will be able to access upon completion of the state's online immunization education module.
- Downloadable certificates and a link to the online education module are available at cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions.

How's your school doing on vaccinations?

Some parents/ guardians/caregivers, especially those with students who have weakened immune systems, may want to know which schools have the highest immunization rates. Annually, schools must report immunization and exemption numbers (but not student names or birth dates) to the state health department. Schools do not control their specific immunization and exemption rates or establish the Vaccinated Children Standard described in §25-4-911, CRS. Schools must include their MMR immunization and exemption rates from the most recently completed school year in this letter. Schools may choose to also include immunization and exemption rates for other school-required vaccines. Additional immunization and exemption rates can be found at COVaxRates.org.

School name	2021-2022 MMR immunization rate REQUIRED IN LETTER	2021-2022 MMR exemption rate REQUIRED IN LETTER
Schools may also include the rates for the school-required vaccines shown below in this annual letter to parents/guardians		
Vaccinated Children Standard 95% immunization rate for all school-required vaccines	2021-2022 DTaP/Tdap immunization rate	2021-2022 DTaP/Tdap exemption rate
	2021-2022 HepB immunization rate	2021-2022 HepB exemption rate
	2021-2022 IPV immunization rate	2021-2022 IPV exemption rate
	2021-2022 Varicella immunization rate	2021-2022 Varicella exemption rate