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**PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS**

**REGISTRATION PROCESS OF NEW STUDENTS:**

Parents, guardians, or responsible persons shall receive information about NC Immunization law upon registering their child in the Orange County School system. This information will include:

1. Current immunization requirements set by the Commission of Health Services
2. Responsibility of the parent/guardian or any other responsible person for submitting an official certificate of immunization by the first day of school attendance
3. Outline what constitutes an official certificate of immunization
4. Permanent enrollment in Orange County Schools is contingent upon completion of the legal immunization requirements
5. At the end of the 30 calendar day period (since the first day of attendance), students who do not meet the legal immunization requirements will be suspended from school and not allowed to return until an official certificate of immunization is submitted
6. If the student's immunizations are not up-to-date, the required immunizations must be obtained within the same 30 day period

Obtain a signature of parent/guardian or any other responsible person indicating that they have received this information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. A copy of this signature and the above information shall be kept in the student's school record.

**OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION:**

Only an official certificate of immunization, according to G.S. 103A-154, shall be accepted for newly registered students. The certificate of immunization must include the following information:

1. Name of child
2. Name of the child's parent, guardian, or person responsible for the child obtaining the required immunization
3. Address of the child and the parent, guardian or responsible person
4. Date of birth of the child
5. Sex of the child
6. Number of doses of the vaccine given
7. Date the doses were given
8. Name and address of the physician or local health department administering the required immunization

**REVIEW, ACCEPTANCE, and MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF IMMUNIZATION:**

All immunization records submitted to the school system for new and transfer students will be reviewed by a school nurse. The nurse will determine the (1) validity of the certificate of immunization; and (2) status of compliance with the current immunization law. The school nurse shall accept all certificates of immunization that are official and complete. The North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR) contains official records and shall be used by the school nurse to access immunization records of newly enrolled students. Note: non-official certificates of immunization may be kept by the school nurse temporarily with the parent's/guardian's clear understanding that they will need to submit an official certificate.

The school nurse will document the status of compliance of NC law on all official certificates of immunization. This documentation will include: (1) "immunizations complete" or "needs (specific vaccine name)"; (2) date of verification; and (3) legal signature. If indicated, up-dated official certificates will replace former certificates as the student progresses through the vaccination series.

Official certificates of immunization which demonstrate full compliance to NC law are then placed in the student's individual cumulative folder and maintained per record-keeping protocol. A separate copy is kept on file in the school nurse's office as back-up.

### **EXEMPTIONS FROM IMMUNIZATIONS**

Students may be exempt from receiving state required vaccinations due to medical or religious reasons.

Valid medical exemptions are determined by a physician. The Commission for Health services requires a licensed physician to certify that a required immunization is or may be detrimental to a person's health due to the presence of one or the contraindications listed by the Commission. The student does not need to receive the specified immunization as long as the contraindication persists. The State Health Director may also approve additional contraindications. For the school to be able to accept a medical exemption, the physician must complete the approved "Medical Exemption Statement" form and submit the form to the school. The form must show the physician's legal signature.

To qualify as a religious exemption, the parent, guardian or responsible person must submit a written, signed, and dated statement of the bona fide religious beliefs and opposition to the immunization requirements. The parent, guardian or responsible person may claim current religious exemption even though the child has received immunizations in the past. However, if the child receives an immunization following the date of the statement, the child will be required to receive other age-appropriate vaccinations.

As of 11/07, Katrina refugees do not need to provide a valid certificate of immunization per the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the NC Immunization Branch. While these medical advisors do not require official proof of immunization, they highly recommend the child being re-vaccinated with official proof of immunization.

All records of exemption must be placed in the student's individual cumulative folder and maintained per record-keeping protocol. A separate copy is kept on file in the school nurse's office as back-up. In addition, the school nurse shall keep a file or list of names of all students with exemptions. This file or list will comprise of the student's name, type of exemption, and any pertinent information about what vaccination(s) has been withheld. During an outbreak, it may be necessary to exclude students from school who are not fully protected.

The school nurse shall make the principal or designee aware of all students with exemptions.

### **STUDENTS IN PROCESS**

If an official certificate of immunization cannot be provided, the student must be revaccinated at an age-appropriate, accelerated schedule to the minimum requirement by NC law.

Any student not fully complying with NC immunization law shall be given 30 calendar days since the date of entry to complete vaccination. During that time, the school nurse will notify the parent, guardian or other responsible person that:

- the student is not in compliance with the law
- what steps are needed for the student to become compliant
- suspension of the student from school will occur on the 31<sup>st</sup> calendar day of school if an official certificate of immunization is not received demonstrating full immunization compliance with NC law

The school nurse determines compliance with NC immunization law and makes recommendations for becoming fully vaccinated according to approved public health guidelines agreed upon in the Memorandum of Agreement between the Orange County Schools and Orange County Health Department. Approved resources outline (1) minimum recommendations for vaccination per NC state law; (2) accelerated vaccination schedules as indicated;

and (3) medically accepted minimal interval times between vaccinations. Students will be allowed to remain in school provided there is documentation showing that the individual is complying with the medically accepted schedule for completing a vaccination series.

While the school nurse will facilitate the process of obtaining proper immunization and documentation, the parent, guardian or other responsible person will be reminded that it is their responsibility to obtain and submit proof of immunization to avoid suspension. Periodically, the nurse will communicate with the principal or designee about the status of compliance to NC law. On the 30<sup>th</sup> calendar day of school, the nurse will submit names of students to the principal or designee of anyone who is not in compliance with NC law.

**ENFORCEMENT OF POLICY**

G.S. 130A-155 holds the principal responsible for enforcing state immunization laws for school entry. The principal or designee will contact the parent, guardian or responsible person and notify them that the student may not return to school until they provide official documentation of compliance with NC immunization law. School suspension shall be enforced until official documentation is received.

**AUDITS and REPORTS**

The State or local health department may audit school immunization records at any time during regular business hours. Delinquent records are subject to legal fines.

Within 60 calendar days after the commencement of a new school year, the school shall file an immunization report with the Department of Health. All schools shall submit information for the report to the school nurse. The Director of Student Services or a school nurse designee shall collect all reports and make a back-up copy to keep on file at the Health & Safety Office. The supervisor shall then submit the original reports to the Department.

Names of students with exemptions are not submitted to the Department of Health unless requested by the state or local department. If requested, the school system shall release the information as required by state law to protect the health of students and other community members.

**RELEASE OF IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**

Immunization records may be copied and shared with parent, legal-aged students, medical providers, public health officials, child care facilities, and other schools upon validation of a legitimate request. Immunization records are sent to other facilities at no cost and despite any outstanding student fees. Orange County Schools will send certificates of immunization to other schools/facilities upon request.