

Policy 2.9 - Required Immunization of School Children

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide standards to the RHAs regarding the documentation required to comply with Sections 12(1) and 12(3) of the *Reporting and Diseases Regulation 2009-136* under the *Public Health Act* pertaining to children entering New Brunswick schools for the first time.

Preamble: Since 1982, New Brunswick legislation has required proof of immunization against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus and polio as a condition of school entry.

In November 2009, the *Public Health Act* was proclaimed. This legislation has expanded the requirements for those children entering New Brunswick schools for the first time to include proof of immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, measles, rubella, mumps, varicella, and meningococcal disease.

Immunization requirements are in place to ensure the maximum level of disease protection afforded by vaccines. A requirement at the time of school entry provides a “catch-up” opportunity for all those children not immunized in early infancy and is an adjunct to the voluntary immunization program. Changes to the requirements are the result of advancements in the science of vaccine preventable diseases, the availability of new vaccines and the inclusion of these vaccines into the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule.

Exemptions from legislated immunization requirements are permitted for medical reasons or if the parent or legal guardian objects to immunization.

Policy: The immunization status of all children entering New Brunswick schools for the first time will be assessed to ensure proof of immunization and provide a catch up opportunity for all those children not immunized in early infancy. (“School” as defined by the *Education Act*).

Standards:

Immunization records of children attending school for the first time will be assessed by the Regional Health Authority, Public Health service.

It must be understood, that although not required for the purposes of this policy, immunization records of school aged children may be assessed as part of a communicable disease response.

1. Proof of immunization will be determined by examination of the child’s immunization record. The record will show immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella and meningococcal disease as per the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule, or as per a prescribed schedule for those not immunized in early infancy AND in conjunction with the current eligibility criteria for publicly funded vaccine.
2. Acceptable schedules for those not immunized in early infancy are those prescribed by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and described in the most current edition of the Canadian Immunization Guide at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/index-eng.php> .
3. A record of immunization will include the following information:
 - a. The name and birth date of the individual;
 - b. The Medicare number of the individual;
 - c. The name of the disease/s immunized against or the name of the product used to immunize the individual;
 - d. The date on which the individual was immunized;
 - e. The name of the person or clinic where the individual was immunized.

4. Proof of immunization is not required if the parent of legal guardian of the child provides:
 - a. A medical exemption signed by a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner, on a form provided by the Minister;
 - b. A written statement of his or her objections to the immunization(s) required by the Minister signed by a parent or legal guardian on a form provided by the Minister.
5. A record of immunization or an *Immunization Exemption Form for School Entry* will be provided to the Public Health Nurse (PHN) by the principal of the school.
6. In the event a child has not received the required immunizations and does not present an Immunization Exemption Form for School Entry, the child's immunizations will be initiated within 120 days and be completed according to the schedule prescribed by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and described in the most current edition of the Canadian Immunization Guide.
7. Relevant sections of *Public Health Act* and the *Reporting and Diseases Regulation- Immunization of Children*, can be found through the Intranet under Acts and Regulations or directly at <http://www.gnb.ca/0062/PDF-regs/2009-136.pdf>
8. Relevant sections of *Education Act* Section 10(1) & 10(2) can be found through the Intranet under the Acts and Regulations or directly at <http://www.gnb.ca/0062/PDF-acts/e-01-12.pdf>
9. The Department of Education's Policy 706, covers Education's role in Required Immunization and can be found at <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pol/e/706A.pdf>
10. The RHAs will submit kindergarten immunization statistics twice in a school year (December 31 and June 30) to the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health on a form provided by the OCMOH.