

North Carolina School Health Program Manual

Section D, School Health Services, Chapter 2, Immunizations

NC Immunization Requirements

Scientists and public health officials are dedicated to understanding and monitoring communicable diseases and the vaccines used to prevent them. The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) makes evidence-based recommendations for vaccinations. Changes to the immunization schedule can be the result of new or improved vaccines, changes to the target population most susceptible to the disease, mutations to the virus/bacteria, or new data about vaccine efficacy. State law directs North Carolina-specific vaccine requirements. The NC Immunization Branch is the agency that oversees the North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP). For specific immunization information, refer to the NC Division of Public Health's Immunization Branch website: <http://www.immunize.nc.gov/>. Resources that may be most helpful to school nurses include:

- [K-12 School Requirements](#)
- [N.C. Rules and Laws](#)
- [Highlights of N.C. Rules and Laws](#)
- [N.C. Exemptions](#)
- [Resources for Schools](#)
- [Child Care Facilities Requirements](#)

The Immunization Branch has created the [Kindergarten Immunization Data Dashboard](#) which shows kindergarten immunization trends from 2020 through 2023. Features include a state-wide county level map, county and school specific data.

The state law requiring immunizations applies to all children regardless of school enrollment. No student may attend any grade (Pre-K through 12) without presenting a certificate of immunization or medical or religious exemption. If a certificate is not presented on the student's first day of attendance, the principal shall present a notice of deficiency to the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians have 30 calendar days from the student's first day of attendance to provide proof of the required immunizations.

At the end of the 30-calendar day period, any child without a certificate of immunization showing that the child has received the required vaccines, shall be prohibited from attending school or childcare. They may not return to school until a certificate of immunization, as required by law, is provided or evidence is shown that the immunization process has begun. Only children who have begun a series of immunizations but have not completed the series due to the need to meet minimum intervals between doses, are considered in process and may attend school. An updated certificate of immunization should be presented each time a student receives vaccine.

The school shall maintain on file, a copy of each student's certificate of immunization as defined by [G.S. 130A-154](#). The school shall file an immunization summary report with the Division of Public Health no later than November 1 of each year.

The North Carolina Immunization Branch [consultants](#) are available to answer questions about immunization services and programs.