

August 24, 2022

Dear Administrator,

Schools play an important role in the health and well-being of North Dakota's young people. One of the most important ways to ensure children are healthy and able to attend school is by maintaining high rates of immunization against vaccine preventable diseases. The North Dakota Department of Health would like to take this opportunity to remind school administrators of their role and responsibility in this effort.

North Dakota Century Code 23-07-17 mandates all students in kindergarten through 12th grade meet a minimum number of required immunizations **prior** to school entrance or have a documented exemption. Each school is responsible for excluding non-compliant students after October 1. Children enrolling in school after October 1st have 30 days to be up-to-date or claim an exemption, or they must be excluded from school. **Even if a child is participating in distance learning, they are still required to be up-to-date on their immunizations or have a documented exemption.** Schools should notify parents of incoming students of immunization requirements. Immunization requirements for the 2022-2023 school year, template letters for parents and frequently asked questions can be found on our [website](#).

With the return of once eliminated diseases such as polio and measles to the United States and across the world, the importance of vaccines and maintaining immunization rates has become more critical. Having vaccine-preventable diseases circulating within a school would lead to large numbers of school absences and adversely affect the health of students. Immunization rates must reach 95% to keep diseases from spreading if introduced into a school. Once rates fall below the 95% threshold, schools become vulnerable to outbreaks of diseases. You can view and compare your school's immunization rates to other schools, county and state rates on our [website](#).

Please contact the NDDoH Immunization Program at 701-328-3386 or toll-free at 800-472-2180 with any questions or concerns regarding school immunizations.



Danni Pinnick, MPH

Immunization Surveillance Coordinator