

August 25, 2022

Dear Colleague:

Health and Education have a long history of working together to ensure that children in Alberta are healthy and protected from vaccine preventable diseases. Immunization saves lives, prevents health complications and is the most cost effective disease prevention program in health care.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) provides the School Immunization Program under policies set out by Alberta Health. Your support to communicate these details of the School Immunization Program to principals and school staff who may be impacted is appreciated.

The 2022 - 2023 School Immunization Program is as follows:

- Grade 1: Review immunization records of all students and offer relevant vaccines to all children who are not up to date according to the Alberta Health recommendations.
- Grade 6: Offer Hepatitis B (HBV) and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) along with all other vaccines the student is eligible for according to the Alberta Health recommendations.
- Grade 9: Offer Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (combined) vaccine, Meningococcal vaccine along with all other vaccines the student is eligible for according to the Alberta Health recommendations.
- Other grades: AHS will provide school immunization services at the earliest opportunity and ensure that every eligible student has access to vaccines for which they have received consent from previous school years. The consent on file from parents or guardians (signed or verbal) will be used. AHS will communicate a plan with the schools to determine service delivery.

School Nurses will schedule immunization presentations prior to the Grade 6 and 9 immunization round. This will provide education and the opportunity to ask questions in an effective way to reduce anxiety and ensure students are prepared for the immunization day.

I would like to highlight some of the ways you and your staff can support the delivery of immunization services in schools:

- Immunization dates are scheduled by the AHS School Team with school staff. AHS teams have very little flexibility due to the required spacing between vaccine doses and the large number of schools we provide service to. We request that schools honor the dates they commit to and refrain from scheduling coinciding events that prevent students from receiving service, such as field trips, guest speakers and exams.
- Providing a workspace that minimizes interruptions in the immunization room will support safety, efficiency and confidentiality.

- Facilitating the timely and confidential distribution of immunization information to parents throughout the year. This may include immunization consent forms, letters and immunization records for the students to bring home to the parent/guardian. Any AHS packages that are unable to be distributed directly to a student must be returned to AHS for appropriate follow up and/or disposal.

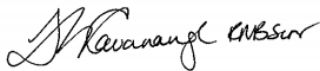
Public Health Nurses are experts on vaccines and the diseases they prevent. Nurses will manage the increased workload to deliver safe immunization programs and continue to support the health needs of schools as they arise. Please encourage your school staff to work with their AHS School Team to develop school-specific plans to meet the needs of the school community.

As more people are immunized, the risk of disease for everyone is reduced. For school staff to learn more information about immunity, immunization and how to protect themselves and their family, visit www.immunizealberta.ca or call Health Link at 811.

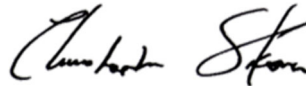
The routine immunization programs offered by Public Health through schools have continued to expand over the years to provide better and broader protection to Alberta students. Our continued partnership is essential for success in promoting healthy students and supporting healthy school environments. Thank you for your support in helping us to deliver the best school-based immunization program possible.

Please contact Teresa Cavanaugh if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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