

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## ADMISSION/ENTRY

### 1. What are the new minimum immunization requirements for school entry?

As of April 7, 2011, to enroll in or attend a public, private, or parochial school in Idaho, a child born after September 1, 2005 must receive the following immunizations: 5 doses of DTaP, 4 Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hepatitis B, 2 Hepatitis A, and 2 Varicella. There are no changes to the minimum immunization requirements for school entry for children born before September 1, 2005.

### 2. What are the 7th grade immunization requirements?

Children admitted to the 7th grade during or after the 2011-2012 school year must meet the following minimum immunization requirements in addition to school entry requirements:

- (1) Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) booster
- (1) Meningococcal vaccine

This requirement will be extended to: 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2012-13, 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2013-14, 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2014-15, 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2015-16, and 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2016-17.

### 3. What must an immunization record include to be considered valid?

A valid immunization record must include the following information:

- (a) the **name** of each required vaccine;
- (b) the **date** (*month/day/year*) of each dose received;
- (c) **confirmation** of all doses by a licensed health care professional (this could include records that are signed, stamped, on official letterhead, or printed from an immunization registry such as IRIS).

### 4. How can a student be conditionally admitted to school?

To be eligible for conditional attendance, a child must have received at least one dose of each required vaccine and currently be on schedule for subsequent immunizations following the ACIP Accelerated Schedule.

### 5. Why aren't Tdap or Meningococcal on the School Conditional Admission form?

To enter the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students are required to have one dose of Tdap and one dose of Meningococcal vaccine; because a child must have received at least one dose of each required vaccine to be eligible for conditional admission, Tdap and Meningococcal are not included on the Idaho Conditional Admission to School form.

### 6. Are transfer students required to provide immunization documentation before being admitted into a new school?

Yes. Before entry, all children transferring from one Idaho school to another or from schools outside Idaho to an Idaho school are required to provide the new school with the appropriate immunization information.

### 7. What about homeless students?

Homeless students are like any other student in your school. They are also required to have immunization records. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (re-authorized Dec. 2001) offers guidelines to assist you.

- (a) The school selected shall immediately enroll the child/youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation [Sec. 722 (g)(3)(C)(i)].
- (b) If a child or youth lacks immunizations or immunization records, the enrolling school must refer the parent/guardian to the liaison who shall help obtain necessary immunizations or immunization records [Sec. 722 (g)(3)(C)(iii)].



## IRIS & CONSENT

### 1. What is IRIS?

IRIS (Idaho's Immunization Reminder Information System) is a statewide system designed to help families and healthcare providers keep track of immunization records. Schools can save time by using IRIS to look up and print copies of children's vaccination records.

### 2. How can I enroll in IRIS?

You can enroll in IRIS by completing the online enrollment form. To locate the form, please visit [www.immunizeidahoschools.com](http://www.immunizeidahoschools.com) and complete the following:

- (a) Scroll down to the **IRIS School Module Username and Password Request** form.
- (b) Fill out all required fields marked with an asterisk (\*) and click **Submit**.
- (c) Your request will be processed within 10 calendar days.

### 3. What should I do if I can't log into IRIS? I've tried logging in and I'm getting a Validation Error that says, "Your account is not active at this time. Please contact your administrator."

If you need your password to be reset, please go to [www.immunizeidahoschools.com](http://www.immunizeidahoschools.com) and complete the **IRIS School Module Username and Password Request Form**. After you complete the entire form and click submit, you should receive an email with a copy of the information you submitted. This email will be your confirmation that your request was submitted successfully to our program and that we are working to process it as quickly as possible.

### 4. I heard the Idaho Immunization Program will enter student immunization records into IRIS at no cost to my school – is this true?

Yes. Schools may send student immunization records to the Idaho Immunization Program to have the record entered into IRIS. Basic demographic information is needed to add students that are not already in IRIS.

### 5. I am using IRIS to figure out which students have already gotten a dose of the Tdap booster and Meningococcal vaccine. Some parents have told me their children received Tdap, but I don't see this listed in IRIS. One of the parents even called their doctor's office to double-check and the nurse confirmed the child had received Tdap and that the record of the shot was in IRIS. I still don't see this in IRIS; what do I do?

In the new IRIS registry, Tdap is listed separately as Td and Pertussis (which likely explains why you couldn't find Tdap on the child's record). When using IRIS to determine whether a student has received Tdap, look to see if a dose of Pertussis is listed in the History section of the IRIS record. If it is, Pertussis should also display as "Complete" in the Vaccines Recommended by Selected Tracking Schedule section at the bottom of the screen. Remember, Td alone does not meet the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Tdap requirement.

*\*\*As a side note, keep in mind that it can take up to 45 days for healthcare providers to enter shot records into IRIS. Therefore, it's possible that you won't find updated records for children who received their shots within in the past 45 days.*



## IMMUNIZATION RECORD REVIEW

### 1. A parent has a partial record and/or statement signed by a physician stating, "All doses received," "Complete," "Up To Date," "Primary series complete," or other similar statements. Can this be accepted as proof of immunization?

No. Statements regarding immunizations which do not contain complete dates for all doses received are NOT adequate for attendance. The parent should contact their health care provider and request a new record documenting all vaccinations and dates administered.

**2. What criteria are used to determine if a student is in compliance with Idaho’s school immunization requirements?**

In order to determine if a child meets the Idaho school immunization requirements, the following must be considered:

- (a) the student’s age;
- (b) whether the student’s immunization history indicates:
  - (i) verification by a medical provider (healthcare provider signature, health clinic stamp, IRIS record).
  - (ii) month, day, and year each vaccine was administered.
  - (iii) sufficient spacing intervals between doses.

These variables make it difficult to describe all possible situations which a school might encounter in its efforts to maintain compliance with the regulations and limit the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases. If you have specific questions which cannot be answered by this guide, please contact the Idaho Immunization Program.

**3. A parent is adamant that his/her child has been vaccinated, but cannot provide written documentation. Can the child be admitted into school?**

No. Children without immunization records cannot be admitted. It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to have written documentation of each child’s immunization status. If the record cannot be located by the parent (or by you after checking IRIS), the child should be vaccinated in an age-appropriate manner with one dose of each required vaccine. The child may be “conditionally admitted” and the facility has the responsibility to follow up to ensure that written records or additional vaccines are received according to schedule.

**4. If a student already had 5 doses of DTaP before the age of 7 years, does he still need the Tdap booster required for 7th grade?**

Yes, all students entering the 7th grade must receive the Tdap booster. Since most children in the 7th grade were born on or before September 1, 1999, they were only required to have 4 doses of DTaP for school entry in Idaho. Therefore, it is a common misconception that adolescents don’t need the Tdap booster if they received a 5<sup>th</sup> dose of DTaP as a child. The 5<sup>th</sup> dose of DTaP does **not** fulfill the 7th grade requirement for the Tdap booster. The immunity received from either early childhood immunization or pertussis disease wears off over time, leaving older students and adults susceptible again to pertussis. Immunization with Tdap can protect students, schools and communities against pertussis.

**5. What if a student already received a dose of Td, does s/he still need to receive the Tdap booster to meet the 7th grade requirement?**

Yes, the student must still receive the Tdap booster. Td vaccine, invented before Tdap, protects persons 7 years and older against tetanus and diphtheria. Td vaccine does not protect against pertussis and so does not meet the 7th grade school Tdap requirement.

**6. What if a child received a pertussis shot (Tdap or DTaP) before their 7th birthday?**

Immunization before the 7th birthday does **not** fulfill the 7th grade school requirement for Tdap, even if given immediately before the 7th birthday.

**7. Does the vaccine abbreviation or trade name on the student's record meet the Tdap requirement?**

Meets 7th Grade Requirement	Vaccine	When given?
<b>YES</b> , meets the requirement.	Tdap Adacel Boostrix DTaP or DTP*	Given on or after the 7th birthday
<b>NO</b> , does not meet requirement.	Td DT DTaP or DTP given before the 7th birthday (usual age limit)	

*\* DTaP or DTP licensed and recommended for children younger than 7 years of age.*

### **8. What is the four-day grace period?**

This time frame allows schools reviewing student records to apply a four-day grace period for a student who received doses of a vaccine too early. Four days is the limit – vaccine doses given up to four days before the minimum interval or age can be counted as valid. Doses given five days or earlier should not be counted as valid and should be repeated. The four-day grace period is not to be used to schedule future doses of vaccine. It is to be used with discretion and with the understanding it is for auditing purposes only.

### **9. When should immunization records be reviewed to determine those students who are not in compliance?**

The time to first assess a child’s immunization status is upon entry into a school. At that time, a “log” could be established to serve as a reminder about children needing additional doses of vaccine at a later date. This would provide the facility an easy method to determine those students “not-in-compliance” based on their own system. The Idaho Immunization Reminder Information System (IRIS) also provides reports of those who need immunizations.

### **10. Why must vaccines be repeated if received before the minimum age or interval?**

Children who receive vaccines before the minimum age or interval may not develop an adequate antibody response to the immunization. Therefore, even though a child physically received a “shot,” it may have been ineffective in protecting the child against disease. By consistently maintaining the minimum age and interval requirements for all vaccines, children are more likely to develop adequate immunity.

### **11. How does Idaho determine the required immunization schedule?**

Idaho’s school immunization requirements are based upon the “Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule” published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This schedule is developed from the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The ACIP includes representatives from both the public health and the private medical sectors, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

### **12. Where can I get blue student health folders?**

The Idaho Immunization Program supplies the blue student health folders (aka “the blue folders”) at no cost to all schools. You may place a resource order online by visiting [www.immunizeidahoschools.com](http://www.immunizeidahoschools.com) and following these steps:

- (a) On the right side of page, scroll down until you see section titled **School Staff Resources**
- (b) Click on link in that section called **Order Blue School Health Folders and Other Resources**
- (c) Complete the form and click **Submit**



## **EXEMPTIONS**

### **1. Are there any allowable exemptions?**

Yes, Idaho Code allows an immunization exemption to be claimed for medical, religious, or personal reasons. All exemptions signed on or after April 7, 2011 must be documented on the official State of Idaho form provided by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Immunization Program. Official exemption forms are available on the **School Immunizations** page of the IIP’s website: [www.immunizeidahoschools.com](http://www.immunizeidahoschools.com).

### **2. What happens to exempted children in the event of a disease outbreak?**

In the event of a disease outbreak, unimmunized children are excluded from school until the outbreak is over, both for their own protection and for the protection of others. No exceptions are made during an outbreak, regardless of circumstances.



### **Where can I find more information about school immunizations?**

Contact the Idaho Immunization Program at (208) 334-6994 or visit our website at [www.immunizeidahoschools.com](http://www.immunizeidahoschools.com).