

IMPORTANT

Immunization: 2023 Child Care and 2023-2024 School Year Immunization Requirements

On January 30, 2023, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) updated Wisconsin's administrative code (Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 144), which outlines immunization requirements for child care and school entry. These changes will go into effect for child care centers beginning February 1, 2023, and for school-age children at the start of the 2023-2024 school year.

These updates will help Wisconsin students, educators, and staff stay safer, healthier, and in school by bringing Wisconsin closer to the current nationwide vaccine recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a group of medical and public health experts who develop recommendations on the use of vaccines in the United States.

Overview of updates

Changes to Wisconsin's childcare and school-required immunizations will improve protection for children across the state by protecting them against vaccine-preventable illnesses, including meningitis, whooping cough, and chickenpox. View the full text of changes or view a summary of the changes.

New changes to school immunization requirements include:

- Changing the **grade at which the Tdap** (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis vaccine) is required to the start of seventh grade. Previously this vaccine was required at the start of sixth grade. This change is to better align with the recommended age (age 11) at which children should receive the vaccine.
- Adding MenACWY-containing vaccine to the requirements for students entering seventh grade, and a booster dose for eligible students entering 12th grade.
- Permitting exceptions to the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine requirement for childcare centers and schools **only if** a qualified health care provider has

confirmed the child's case. Parental confirmation is no longer accepted, however existing exemption options still apply.

- Updating the definitions of “substantial outbreak” for both child care centers and schools by revising to align with CDC definitions and to add chickenpox and meningococcal disease to the definitions.
- Requiring schools to provide reports of vaccine compliance and disease outbreaks to DHS in addition to the previously existing requirement to report to local health departments.
- Removing outdated provisions relating to the 2008-2009 phase-in of Tdap and varicella vaccines.

What has not changed?

- The updated requirements leave in place the already established list of required vaccinations.
- In addition, the existing exemption options for medical, religious, or philosophical reasons are still available. A signed waiver is still required if a parent/guardian prefers a school age child not receive a specific immunization.
- There is **no requirement for seasonal flu vaccination or COVID-19 vaccination**. These remain strongly recommended by leading health experts, including DHS, CDC, AAP, ACOG, AAFP, and others.
- When will the new rules go into effect?
 - Requirements for childcare centers are effective as of February 1, 2023. Requirements for school-age children will go into effect at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school nurse,

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