



## **IMMUNIZATION SURVEILLANCE AND SUSPENSIONS**

### **Questions and Answers for School Principals**

#### **1. Why does the health unit collect student immunization records?**

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health unit is required under the provincial Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) to collect and maintain up-to-date immunization records for every student registered in school in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka.

#### **2. What are the designated diseases required under the ISPA?**

The following are the nine designated diseases that are mandatory for students to be immunized for under the ISPA

- Diphtheria
- Pertussis
- Tetanus
- Poliomyelitis
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Meningococcal disease
- Varicella (mandatory for those born since January 1, 2010)

#### **3. Under what Act is the Principal to enforce suspensions?**

Principals are legally required under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) to enforce suspensions due to outstanding immunization:

*Order for suspension re designated diseases*

*6. (1) A medical officer of health, in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (2), by a written order may require a person who operates a school in the area served by the medical officer of health to suspend from attendance at the school a pupil named in the order. R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1, s. 6 (1).*

#### **4. What Role does the Principal play?**

The Principal plays a key role in immunization surveillance and suspension. Principals have a relationship with students and their families and are able to offer encouragement, reminders and assistance to comply with the ISPA requirements. Principals do have the role of enforcing the suspension order issued by the health unit's Medical Officer of Health. Principals will need to enforce the suspension order until the student meets the requirements. Maintaining an open communication with the SMDHU nursing staff will facilitate the process.

**5. How are the parents/guardians/students informed of the suspension?**

Immunization Notices and Suspension Orders are mailed home well in advance of suspension day to any student with an incomplete immunization record.

**6. What happens when suspended students show up at school the morning of suspension?**

Suspended students attending school must be removed from the classroom and detained in a predetermined location at the school. Parents must be contacted and if possible the student should be picked up and removed from the school. Parents should be contacted by the school to indicate that the student may not return until the immunization information is provided to the health unit.

**7. Do International Students need to comply with the ISPA requirements?**

Yes. All students registered for school need to comply with the ISPA requirements.

**8. How long can a student be suspended from school due to incomplete immunization?**

A student will remain under suspension for up to 20 school days. If the required immunization information has not been received within 20 days, the order for suspension will be re-issued.

**9. What if a student cannot receive immunization for philosophical or medical reasons?**

Exemptions are available for both philosophical and medical reasons. Encourage the student/parent to contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to be advised of the requirements.

**10. Where can students have their immunization updated?**

Required immunizations may be obtained from the student's health care provider. If a student does not have a health care provider, they may contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health unit at 705-721-7520 to set up an appointment.

**If you are aware of difficulties or challenges that a student and their family are facing, your input to the health unit is invaluable. We can work with these students/families, as needed, to assist them in getting the required immunizations long before it is suspension day.**