

ATTENTION: Principals and school staff

RE: Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) Enforcement; 2018-2019

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Each year, the Health Unit's Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD) program assesses immunization records for students attending school. If the record on file does not meet the requirements of the Immunization of Schools Pupils Act (ISPA), a notice is mailed directly to parents/guardians to inform them of the action required to prevent further correspondence and avoid school suspension.

This document provides answers to commonly asked questions. Please share widely with your staff. An overview of the process, with school-specific dates, is included in Appendix A. A sample of the Request for Information Notice that parents/guardians will receive is included in Appendix B.

1. Can our school receive a list of students who are receiving suspensions prior to the actual suspension date?

The VPD program does not send a list until the suspension date because the list frequently changes as information is received and students are removed from the list.

As such, the VPD Program cannot guarantee that the list you have is the most up-to-date list until the suspension date.

2. When will our school receive the list?

On the morning the suspension takes effect, the school will receive a copy of the list of students to be suspended, either by fax or email.

Schools must contact the parents/guardians to notify them that:

- a) The student is unable to attend school; and
- b) The VPD Program must be contacted at 625-5900.

3. How will the school be notified that the student can return back to school?

VPD program staff will phone the school office to advise that the student can be removed from the suspension list.

Only VPD Program staff can advise the school that the student is no longer suspended and that the client is up to date for school attendance.

4. Should the school be contacting parents/guardians and informing them that their child is eligible for suspension when the Order of Suspension is received by the school?

The VPD Program appreciates the support; however, we ask that schools not contact parents/guardians after receiving the Orders for Suspensions.

Some parents/guardians have already contacted the VPD Program after receiving the first notice. If contacted by the school, it could cause confusion for parents/guardians after having already discussed the notice with the VPD Program.

NOTE: The Health Unit process requires the Orders for Suspension to be sent to both the school and the parents/guardians. Schools must have copies as it is the responsibility of the school to enforce the Orders of Suspension once they receive the final list on the first day of the suspension period for their school. Parents/guardians have an additional two weeks to submit the required information to the VPD Program once they receive the Order for Suspension.

5. What if a parent/guardian contacts the school with questions?

Please advise parents/guardians to contact the VPD Program at 625-5900. The call will be directed to a phone duty nurse.

6. How long is the period of suspension once it takes effect?

The student is suspended for 20 school days. Civic holidays and PA days are included in the 20 days. However, winter and spring break are exempt.

Please contact the Healthy Schools Nurse assigned to your school (625-5972) **OR** the VPD program (625-5900) if you have any questions or concerns that have not been addressed in this document. We appreciate the school staff's assistance and patience with this process and look forward to working with you throughout the school year.

Thank you,

Vaccine Preventable Disease & Healthy Schools Programs
Thunder Bay District Health Unit