



## Thunder Bay District Health Unit

### MAIN OFFICE

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### GERALDTON

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Geraldton, ON P0T 1M0  
Tel: (807) 854-0454  
Fax: (807) 854-1871

### MANITOUWADGE

1-888-294-6630

### MARATHON

P.O. Box 384  
Marathon High School  
building,  
14 Hemlo Drive, Suite B  
Marathon, ON P0T 2E0  
Tel: (807) 229-1820  
Fax: (807) 229-3356

### RED ROCK

P.O. Box 196  
Superior Greenstone District  
School Board Learning Centre  
46 Salls Street  
Suite #2  
Red Rock, ON P0T 2P0  
Tel: (807) 886-1060  
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### TERRACE BAY

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TBDHU.COM

February 16, 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians of high school students in the District of Thunder Bay

### RE: 2023/24 school year immunization programming for High School students in District

Thunder Bay District Health Unit is moving forward with the immunization program for high school students this school year as per standard practice and the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA). This includes the review and assessment of all student immunization records, the notification to parents/guardians of missing vaccines or missing information, and vaccination clinics in all high schools and in the community to support routine and catchup immunizations.

Please note that in the 2023/24 school year, we will be returning to the full ISPA process for high school students, including the suspension process for students who are overdue and whose records remain incomplete.

ISPA is an Ontario law requiring students under the age of 18 attending school in Ontario to be vaccinated against nine specific diseases or have a valid exemption on file with their local Health Unit. For further information about the ISPA process and vaccines for school-aged children and youth, please visit [tbdhu.com/schoolimmunizations](http://tbdhu.com/schoolimmunizations).

### Common reasons why a youth in this age group may be considered “overdue” under ISPA:

- They have had the vaccine(s) but the record has not been submitted to the Health Unit.
- They have not had the required vaccine(s) and there is no exemption on file.

### What Parents/Guardians Can Expect:

- Parents/Guardians of students who are considered “overdue” in completing their immunization record under ISPA will receive a notice entitled “**Immunization Notice: Preventing Suspension**”. This notice will be mailed to the home address on file with the school for the student. The dates are indicated in the table below. Parents/Guardians may receive the notice with this letter. Students considered overdue and whose record remain incomplete will be eligible for suspension.
- The first immunization notice includes directions to follow in order to comply with ISPA requirements. Please follow the directions outlined. Call your closest TBDHU branch office and ask to speak with a public health nurse for any questions.
- TBDHU will be offering **school-based vaccine clinics** in high schools in each community. This is an opportunity to help overdue students complete their immunization record and avoid suspension. **Consent forms** will be sent to the home address for all students eligible for routine vaccines. Please complete and return the consent form to the school.
- If you/your family has specific needs in order to comply with ISPA requirements, please reach out. We provide individualized support to families who require this.

### Suspension Process for High School Students for the 2023/24 School Year in the District:

In April, approximately two months after the first immunization notice, a second notice will be sent to students who are still considered “overdue” in completing their immunization record under ISPA. This second notice will be mailed to the home address on file with the school for the student and will include an **Order for Suspension** with directions to follow in order to comply with ISPA requirements and avoid suspension. The school suspension period will begin two weeks later and will be enforced by the school.

TBDHU will also be providing a clinic on the first day of the suspension period to help overdue students complete their immunization record. TBDHU will immediately rescind a suspension order for a student when their record is completed, and students may return to school right away. If the student immunization record remains incomplete, the suspension will last 20 days.

This table provides the dates for the various steps in this process for each District community:

Community	'Immunization Notice: Preventing Suspension' are mailed	High School Vaccination Clinic	Order of Suspension are mailed	Date Suspension Begins	TBDHU Clinic
Greenstone	February 13	March 18	April 8	April 23	April 23
Terrace Bay & Schreiber	February 20	March 25	April 15	April 30	April 30
Nipigon, Red Rock & Dorion	February 26	April 3	April 22	May 7	May 7
Marathon & Manitouwadge	March 4	April 15	April 29	May 14	May 14

Note that students in grades 11 and 12 will be called down to the school clinic and can provide their own consent for vaccination if the consent form was not completed by their parent/guardian.

#### Contact information for local TBDHU branch offices:

- For Greenstone, call 807-854-0454.
- For Marathon, Manitouwadge, Terrace Bay & Schreiber, call 807-229-1820.
- For Nipigon, Red Rock & Dorion, call 807-886-1060.

We greatly appreciate your efforts to help ensure students are protected against vaccine preventable diseases.

Sincerely,



Janet DeMille, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health & Chief Executive Officer  
Thunder Bay District Health Unit