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WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL-BASED IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS?

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28 PA Code Chapter 23 lists Pennsylvania's school immunization requirements: Students at any grade, Kindergarten through 12th, including all public, private, parochial, or nonpublic schools in this commonwealth must show proof of immunization before they can attend school. This requirement also pertains to vocational schools, alternative education programs, intermediate units, special education, home education programs, charter, and cyber charter schools. Students in all grades must meet the following immunization requirements:

- 4 doses of tetanus, with 1 dose on or after 4th birthday
- 4 doses of diphtheria, 1 dose on or after 4th birthday
- 3 doses of polio;
- 2 doses of measles;
- 2 doses of mumps;
- 1 dose of rubella;
- 3 doses of hepatitis B;
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or history of disease.

Students entering 7th grade must also have:

- 1 dose MCV;
- 1 dose of Tdap (if 5 years have elapsed since last tetanus immunization).

The school district can deny admission, for noncompliance, until a student receives at least one dose of each antigen, including DT, OPV/IPV, MMR, HepB, and Varicella.

Students who have at least one dose of each antigen, including DT, OPV/IPV, MMR, HepB, and Varicella, can attend school while placed on provisional status. The matter should then be reviewed every 60 days, for 8 months. After the provisional period of 8 months, the school district is within its rights to exclude these students for non-compliance.

7th grade students who have not received the additional doses should be allowed to attend school while placed on provisional status. The matter should be reviewed every 60 days for 8 months. The school district may exclude students from school if non-compliance continues past the provisional period of 8 months.

Foreign exchange students or foreign students visiting Pennsylvania schools need at least one-dose of each antigen to attend or visit, then are on provisional status thereafter (with the 60 day review, for 8 months).

There are only three exemptions to the school laws for immunizations:

- Medical reasons;
- Religious beliefs; and
- Philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction.

If a student is exempt from immunizations, the student may be removed from school during outbreaks.

Clients who have questions regarding issues discussed in this article, or any education law matter, should feel free to call us at 215-345-9111.

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