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| Scan of School-based Communicable Disease Plans in Canadian Provinces and Territories | Abstract  A summary of the school-based non-COVID-19 communicable disease plans used in Canadian Provinces and Territories  Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH)  May 18 2022 |

Summary

# This Environmental Scan is a request originating from Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC):

# To collect information on school-based communicable disease plans (non-COVID-19) in each province/territory in Canada. This scan includes related questions from Ontario sent in July 2021 regarding vaccinations / immunizations (not related to COVID-19).

Full Set of questions:

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.
2. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations and vaccinations, and if so, what is the process?
3. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?
4. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?
5. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.

Information will be compiled and shared with members of (JCSH).

Scan Results**[[1]](#footnote-1)**

| **Province/ Territory** | **Plan Description** | **Compliance Mechanisms** | **Non-Compliance Responses** | **Collaborations H and E** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AB | [Alberta Routine Childhood Immunization Schedule Effective January 1, 2021](https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/58d31634-61d9-469d-b95f-f714719b923e/resource/8a7e1078-5d4e-4e47-a6c2-e7261f73feb1/download/aip-routine-childhood-schedule.pdf)  [Alberta Communicable Diseases Regulation](https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/1985_238.pdf) | Recommended | Measles only | Collaboration of “H” (health/public health) and “E” (schools/ districts) on immunization promotion, follow-up |
| MB |  | Information | Specific disease outbreak only |  |
| NB | [Public School Policy 706 - Proof of Immunization](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/706A.pdf)  Also, In Development: Notifiable Disease School Policy | Required | Refuse admission to school; certain exceptions | Public Health Information Solution (PHIS)  [What you need to know about Immunization (gnb.ca)](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/immunization.html); [Communicable Disease Control - Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (gnb.ca)](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc.html) |
| NL | [publichealth-cdc-immunization-schedule.pdf (gov.nl.ca)](https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-immunization-schedule.pdf) | Recommended | Parents of non-vaccinated student may consult health care provider | Considerable collaboration between public health nurses and schools/staff |
| NWT |  | CPHO decision | Alternative education provisions  Suspension under designated circumstances |  |
| NU | N/A |  |  |  |
| ON | Ontario’s Immunization of School Pupils Act  <https://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines-children-school>  [Immunization of School Pupils Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1 (ontario.ca)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90i01) | Enforcement protocol | Targeted outreach to parents and families of those students who may be facing suspension and/or exclusion due to lapsed vaccinations. | Local Public Health Units (PHUs) work in partnership with schools to offer school-based vaccination programs. |
| PEI | [Prince Edward Island Childhood Immunizations](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/childhood-immunizations) | Information | Not applicable | Public health nursing administer all childhood vaccines from birth to grade 12 |
| SK | Provincial School Immunization Policy (not posted publicly) | Information | Not applicable | Ministry of Education downloads student information to Panorama, the immunization database.  Discussions with the Ministry of Education regarding promotion of use of Kids Boost Immunity in schools to encourage immunization. |
| YT | <https://yukonimmunization.ca/> | Recommended/Information | Not applicable  And/or  Information from Education & Health to school aged children/families | Local Public Health Units (PHUs) work in partnership with schools to offer school-based vaccination programs. In Yukon, grade 6/7 and 9/10 are school based immunization programs.  <https://yukonimmunization.ca/diseases-vaccines/grade-6-9-school-based-immunization> |

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A: Alberta**

1. Does your province have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.

Childhood immunizations as per the posted immunization schedule are recommended, however, there are no requirements - no immunizations are mandatory.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/58d31634-61d9-469d-b95f-f714719b923e/resource/8a7e1078-5d4e-4e47-a6c2-e7261f73feb1/download/aip-routine-childhood-schedule.pdf>

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations, and if so, what is the process?

Parents may choose not to have their child immunized, but will be reminded of the well-established practice that their child will be excluded from school in the event of a serious vaccine-preventable disease outbreak such as measles. Included in the Communicable Diseases Regulation p. 33:

Quarantine

**4** When a case of measles occurs in a school, the medical officer

of health shall order that any susceptible person at risk of exposure

be excluded from attendance at school for a period of 14 days after

the onset of symptoms in the last known case occurred or until the

person is immunized.

Special Measures

**5** The medical officer of health shall order that an infected person

be excluded from school and non-familial contacts from the onset

of the catarrhal stage to the end of the 3rd day of the rash.

<https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/1985_238.pdf>

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

Alberta Health receives a list of student enrolment information from Alberta Education (see section 18.2 p. 20 for requirements listed in the *Public Health Act* <https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/P37.pdf>

The Health Authority works with schools to send out consents. School nurses contact parents at least three times (phone and then mailed letter) unless a refusal is provided to reach parents. If a true refusal is provided a refusal code is entered into the system as a non immunization event.

All the health authority info is available here: <https://albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page10802.aspx>

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

Paper consent requirements are time consuming – no movement for electronic consents, however, work is ongoing. Catch-up programs are in place to increase school immunization rates as a result to shifts to on-line learning the last two years – plan to complete catch programs by June 2023.

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.

A letter about the importance of immunization to parents from Alberta Health and Alberta Education went out a few years back, however, this is not typical or routine. Joint letters in relations to influenza season and during COVID-19 peaks also have gone out jointly.

**Appendix B: Manitoba**

1. Does your province/territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.

No Manitoba does not require immunizations in school-aged children before entering.

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations, and if so, what is the process?

No, as we do not have school-entry immunization requirements. However, in the event of an outbreak there is the ability for the chief provincial public health officer to remove any students who are not fully immunized for that particular disease from the school setting for a certain amount of time or unless they can show proof of immunization.

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

The public health workers in each region work with the school boards and schools to obtain class lists for the grades in which they will be going to do the school immunization programs (grade 6 and grade 8 or 9 depending on the school). Consent forms and information packages are put together and provided to the schools to provide them to the appropriate classes. The class lists are uploaded into the immunization registry to allow the region to identify if they received a consent form back, prepare for the school immunization program based on the returned forms, and they review to see if any children have outstanding immunizations. Those that have outstanding immunizations, their parents may be contacted to see if they can make an appointment to get the child caught up or some may offer the additional doses when they are at the school. Each region has their own processes to manage the school immunizations and outstanding immunizations for their populations. The reasons for being behind in immunizations varies and as such there is not a one size fits all approach to catching up immunizations for children. Manitoba also sends out letters to parents of children who are missing immunizations at certain ages.

For more information, please contact: [vaccines@gov.mb.ca](mailto:vaccines@gov.mb.ca)

**Appendix C: New Brunswick**

      Note: This scan is based primarily on immunization requirements (as per the question requested). However NB is actually working on a **Notifiable Disease School Policy** which does not focus just on Proof of Immunization (we already have a policy 706 that outlines those requirements). Due to the recent pandemic, the new school policy will outline requirements based on prevention (hand-washing, disinfecting, etc.), illness monitor (stay home when sick, Public Health notifiable disease requirements, etc.) and outbreak management. It will be very similar to the COVID response guidelines that were developed due to the pandemic but focusing on all notifiable diseases.  The goal is to prepare our schools in case of any future communicable disease outbreak or pandemic.

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.

The [NB Education Act](https://laws.gnb.ca/en/ShowPdf/cs/E-1.12.pdf) and the [NB Public Health Act](https://laws.gnb.ca/en/ShowPdf/cs/P-22.4.pdf) states that all students entering NB Public School System must demonstrate proof of immunization against diseases cited in the [Reporting and Disease Regulation](https://laws.gnb.ca/en/ShowPdf/cr/2009-136.pdf) under the Public Health Act.

NB Education Act states:

10(1)A superintendent shall refuse admission to a pupil entering school for the first time who does not provide satisfactory proof of the immunizations required under the Public Health Act or the regulations under that Act.

10(2)Subsection (1) does not apply to a pupil whose parent provides

(a) a medical exemption, on a form provided by the Minister and signed by a medical practitioner, or

(b) a written statement, on a form provided by the Minister and signed by the parent, of the parent’s objection for reasons of conscience or religious belief to the immunizations required under the Public Health Act or the regulations under that Act.

Public Health Act states:

42.1(1) The principal of a school shall require that proof of immunization is provided to him or her for any disease prescribed by regulation for a child attending school in the Province for the first time.

42.1(2) The operator of an early learning and childcare facility shall require that proof of immunization is provided to him or her for any disease prescribed by regulation for a child attending that facility.

42.1(3) Despite subsection (1) or (2), proof of immunization is not required if the parent or legal guardian of a child provides the following:

            (a) a medical exemption, on a form provided by the Minister, that is signed by a medical practitioner or

            nurse practitioner, or

            (b) a written statement, on a form provided by the Minister, signed by the parent or legal guardian of his or her objections to the immunizations.

[Public School Policy 706 - Proof of Immunization](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/706A.pdf) provide direction regarding the collection and management of immunization data as a condition for admission to the public school system.

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations and vaccinations, and if so, what is the process?

In section 10 of the NB Education Act a Superintendent shall refuse admission to a pupil entering school for the first time who does not provide satisfactory proof of the immunizations required under the Public Health Act or the regulations under that Act.

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

Proof of immunization refers to any one of the following:

* + - a listing of the vaccinations received by a child, signed by a medical professional;
    - a medical exemption signed by a medical professional; or
    - a declaration of objection to immunization signed by a parent for reason of conscience or religious beliefs.

School personnel are responsible for verifying that proof of immunization has been received by parent. The Public Health Office is responsible for determining whether the information is accurate.

The Public Health Office verifies immunization records and informs the school principal of incomplete records. The principal is responsible for notifying parents of this fact.

When proof of immunization is not provided or it does not meet all the requirements for school entry, parents have 120 days to complete the students’ immunizations or provide a signed exemption form.

The principal must ensure that they keep lists of all students enrolled in their school who;

* are up to date on their vaccinations;
* have a signed exemption form; or
* have not provided any proof of immunization.

These list help principals during an outbreak identify students whom may be at risk.

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

From the most recent immunization data from NB Public Schools and Public Health:

* + - 80% of students have provided proof of immunization
    - 1% of students have provided an exemption
    - 17% of students have incomplete records

The Department of Health and Education in NB are currently implementing the Public Health Information Solution (PHIS) that will help store and manage immunization data for schools.

A part-of-the-PHIS initiative is to develop an immunization registry to allow PH nurses access to immunization records.

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.

The NB Department of Health’s website has a lot of information, videos, fact sheets, etc. to support and inform families regarding immunizations.  School throughout the province promote immunization during Kindergarten Orientation every year by using and directing families to the websites -  [What you need to know about Immunization (gnb.ca)](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/immunization.html) and [Communicable Disease Control - Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (gnb.ca)](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc.html)

**Appendix D: Newfoundland and Labrador**

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.

Immunizations for school-aged children are not required in NL, but strongly encouraged.  Infant and childhood vaccines are offered primarily through public health.  Here is the link for our immunization program:

[publichealth-cdc-immunization-schedule.pdf (gov.nl.ca)](https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-immunization-schedule.pdf)

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations and vaccinations, and if so, what is the process?

No process in place for suspension or exclusion.  If an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease in a school is identified, parents of the unimmunized child could have a discussion with their health care provider re: risks/benefits and may choose to exclude on their own.

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

Public health nurses are assigned to each school within the province.  School staff and the PHN work closely together to ensure administration of vaccines are accessible within the school environment and are offered to applicable students efficiently.  School staff and the PHN often collaborate to provide communication to parents related to vaccine administration within the school.  PHNs are also flexible and offer school vaccines outside the school environment (i.e. office) if needed to ensure vaccines are received within an appropriate timeframe.

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

School-age vaccination rates within NL are very high.  The accessibility of public health nursing and collaboration with schools have played a role in this achievement.  Public health measure put in places as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has created some challenges with offering school-aged vaccines.

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share

If trying to reach the school-age population, we often send communication from the CMOH through the department of Education. This communication will be shared with the school community.

**Appendix E: Northwest Territories**

1. Does your province have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used?

There are no general requirements to receive immunizations or vaccinations to attend schools in the NWT, nor broad authority to exclude or suspend students who are not vaccinated or immunized.

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations, and if so, what is the process?

The Chief Public Health Officer is authorized under s. 25(1) of the *Public Health Act* to make orders which are necessary to decrease or eliminate the risk presented by a reportable disease, as defined in the Act. This order may include a provision which restricts access to premises to individuals who are not immunized against the disease, which could include not allowing students to attend to schools when they are not immunized against that disease.

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

During the recent pandemic, health and education authorities worked closely together in terms of the dissemination of information and the timely roll out of immunizations against COVID 19.

1. Does your province / territory exclude or suspend students for non-compliance to communicable disease responses, including immunizations and vaccinations? Or have other responses for non-compliance?

Under s. 7(3)(a) of the *Education Act,* where a student has a communicable disease, the Chief Public Health Officer can advise that the student should not receive the education program in a regular instructional setting. This would then require the student to receive the education program elsewhere and could lead to suspension if the student attended the school premises.

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

Age of consent was a challenge as the capacity to consent concept is applied in health whereas legal age and ensuring parent/guardian consent is commonly applied in education.

The NTHSSA vaccine form uses the following language:

*Young people in the NWT may access medical services and interventions without consent from parents or guardians, including sexual health services and immunizations. There is no legal minimum age for medical consent in our territory and is based on the practitioner assessment of the individual’s ability to comprehend the risks and benefits of the medical service and intervention being consented to. If an individual is not able to provide independent consent (usually 13 and under), written consent is required.*

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.

Below is a chronological listing of some of the communications used regarding immunizations as well as health and safety requirements. These are direct letters and news releases.

**May 2021: Letters provided for schools to share with staff and students/families following an outbreak**

Language around vaccinations: *NTHSSA will continue to provide Pfizer vaccine clinics for 12-17-year-olds so we can get shots into the arms of our young people and protect them from this virus. We encourage our 12-17-year-old population to get vaccinated if they haven’t already. Vaccines are safe, they work and they are available. It’s the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community.*

Language around requirements/compliance : *Anyone who was isolating due to the recent Yellowknife COVID-19 cluster must be retested and told by public health that it is safe to return to school. Anyone who had tested positive for COVID will receive advice directly from public health as to when their isolation may end.*

**May 2021: News Release from NTHSSA regarding vaccine clinics in schools (**[**here**](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/pfizer-biontech-vaccine-clinics-hay-river-inuvik-and-fort-smith-starting-may-26)**)**

Language: *The next shipment of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has arrived in the NWT. Clinic details for residents aged 12-17 is being finalized for Hay River, Inuvik, and Ft. Smith. They are set to begin  by the end of May. Full details will be posted to the health authority social media pages and online at*[*https://www.nthssa.ca/covid-vaccine*](https://www.nthssa.ca/covid-vaccine)*. Residents aged 12-17, living in one of these three communities  will be offered vaccine through their school. Youth can also contact their local public health office for other appointment options.*

**June 2021: Email to Superintendents regarding a youth vaccine Q&A video (attached)**

The email highlighted a youth vaccination video that was created by Health and Social Services. The video featured questions posed by students, and the responses from Dr. Pegg. Some of the questions included: What if my parents don’t want me to get a COVID-19 vaccine? Why can I still get COVID-19 after I’m vaccinated? Will COVID-19 vaccines affect my ability to have a baby later in life? If not, why not? Are kids at high risk of getting sick from COVID-19? Do we really need the vaccine? Do COVID-19 vaccines increase the likelihood of blood clots? Who made the COVID-19 vaccines? Can these companies be trusted? What does it mean that the COVID-19 vaccines were “fast-tracked”? Are they still safe?

**August 2021: News Release published by HSS on Isolation and Vaccination information for returning NWT students:** [here](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/isolation-and-vaccination-information-returning-nwt-students)

Language around vaccination: *Adult NWT students are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine after their self-isolation period is complete. Students who live in Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, or Norman Wells can contact their*[*local public health unit*](https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/hospitals-and-health-centres)*to arrange vaccination in their home community. Those living in Yellowknife can book*[*online*](https://nthssabookings.simplybook.me/v2/)*or by calling (867) 767-9120. Adult NWT students returning to smaller communities outside of the regional centres mentioned above who would like to get vaccinated must e-mail*[*CPHO@gov.nt.ca*](mailto:CPHO@gov.nt.ca)*and provide: Their full name, Their contact phone number, Their home community, The community they will be isolating in upon return to the NWT, Their date of arrival in the NWT  
The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) will arrange to vaccinate these students before their return home. Students who do not return to the NWT for the summer are unlikely to qualify to get the COVID-19 vaccine in another province or territory where they are not a resident. The GNWT encourages all eligible NWT residents to get vaccinated to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities against COVID-19. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get the disease.*

**FYI Only - October 2021:** [Vaccination Requirements will now apply to all GNWT employees | Government of Northwest Territories](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/vaccination-requirements-will-now-apply-all-gnwt-employees)

**January 2022: News Release from HSS for** [Renewed Focus on NWT Vaccine Uptake, New Tools and Resources for 5-11 Group](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/renewed-focus-nwt-vaccine-uptake-new-tools-and-resources-5-11-group)

Language included: *In advance of*[*National Kids and Vaccines Day on January 27th*](https://www.scienceupfirst.com/kids-vaccines-day/)*, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has developed engaging new COVID-19 resources for NWT children aged 5-11 and their parents.*

*In conjunction with the*[*Vaccine Tips Sheet for Parents*](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/covid-19/en/vaccination-tips-parents-and-caregivers)*, the*[*5-11 Vaccine Q&A*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7BWNGPAqbY)*, and the*[*“Health Professionals Talk” video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tie3OFbLFlQ)*, these new resources include:*

* *A new video:*[*Kids Talk*](https://youtu.be/KUdkJSyq6gA)*, which features children in the NWT discussing why the vaccine is important to them.*
* *A superhero comic book:*[*The Arctic Vaccinator*](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/covid-19/en/services/covid-19-vaccine/be-vaccine-hero)*, which helps children learn more about how the vaccine works and why it helps the community, through a Northern-based adventure.*
* *An*[*Arctic Vaccinator colouring sheet:*](https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/covid-19/en/services/covid-19-vaccine/be-vaccine-hero)*children can submit their entries along with a quote about why the vaccine is important to them, for a chance to win a prize.*

**January 2022: Letter sent to parents/guardians around the expectations for returning to in-person learning**

Language was around safety protocols such as masking and staying home when sick. There was no specific direction around vaccinations.

**February 2022: Letter to parents/guardians about changes to isolation**

Language around isolating/vaccination status: *Students attending JK-12 do not need to isolate, regardless of their vaccination status, when there is an exposure.*

**March 31, 2022: Letter to parents/guardians about end of public health emergency**

Language around screening and vaccination: *Students and staff are still expected to use the Daily Symptom Screening Tool for Students, School Staff and Early Childhood Care Workers. If students or staff are sick, they should stay home. It is important to note that two vaccine doses plus a booster shot have proven effective at reducing the severity of illness from a COVID infection.*

**Appendix F: Ontario**

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.

Ontario’s Immunization of School Pupils Act

The Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) requires parents to get their children immunized against the designated diseases in the Act, unless a valid exemption is on file, and for a record of immunization to be maintained by the local medical officer of health, to respond to and protect students in the event of cases and outbreaks of these designated diseases.

Designated diseases in the Act are diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal, pertussis, and varicella.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines-children-school>

[Immunization of School Pupils Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1 (ontario.ca)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90i01)

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations and vaccinations, and if so, what is the process?

The Medical Officer of Health, working with schools, may order the suspension of a student for whom the local public health unit (PHU) does not have required immunization records or a valid exemption.

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

School Boards and schools work with local public health units to do targeted outreach to parents and families of those students who may be facing suspension and/or exclusion due to lapsed vaccinations.

Local public health units/medical officers of health are responsible for enforcing the ISPA, communicating to parents/families in their jurisdictions, and collaborating as needed with school boards and school operators.

The following protocol falls under the requirements within [Ontario’s Public Health Standards](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/), and it outlines requirements for local public health units as it pertains to immunization for children in schools and licensed child care centres:

[Immunization for Children in Schools and Licensed Child Care Settings Protocol, 2018 (gov.on.ca)](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/protocols_guidelines/Immunization_Schools_Child_Care_Protocol_2018_en.pdf)

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

As a result of physical distancing and other public health measures in response to COVID-19, the routine immunization schedule of many children has been impacted.

In many communities, schools act as hubs for engagement and exchange with parents and families. Public health information is often promoted and disseminated through the local school.

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.



For more information made available to the public, please visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines-children-school>

The Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) requires parents to get their children immunized against the designated diseases in the Act, unless a valid exemption is on file, and for a record of immunization to be maintained by the local medical officer of health, to respond to and protect students in the event of cases and outbreaks of these designated diseases.

Designated diseases in the Act are diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal, pertussis, and varicella.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines-children-school>

[Immunization of School Pupils Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1 (ontario.ca)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90i01)

**Appendix G: Prince Edward Island**

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.

Immunizations are not a requirement for school entry.

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations, and if so, what is the process?

Not applicable

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

Public health nursing administer all childhood vaccines from birth to grade 12.(exception – influenza vaccine can be given as well by a pharmacist or in a physician’s / nurse practitioner’s office.

1. Does your province / territory exclude or suspend students for non-compliance to communicable disease responses, including immunizations and vaccinations? Or have other responses for non-compliance?

PEI does not exclude or suspend students who are partially or unimmunized. Immunization is not mandatory to enter school.

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

PEI historically has high rates of vaccine uptake (>95%) in their childhood program. The indicators for the PEI school-based immunization program are:

* fully immunized by Grade 1;
* HPV vaccine uptake in Grade 6;
* immunized in Grade 9 for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and meningococcal disease

Challenges are low rates for HPV uptake in grade 6 for both boys and girls (<85%)

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share

Prior to 2020 the CPHO provided the Department of Education school-based immunization rates overall and for individual schools. The department then releases the rates to the individual schools. For program planning purposes, rates are also provided to Public Health Nursing who provide childhood immunization from infancy to the end of grade 12.

**Appendix H: Saskatchewan**

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / links if available.

SK does not have required immunizations for school entry.

The Provincial School Immunization Policy is updated each year and provides direction on immunizing students in Grades 1, 6 and 8 in schools to:

* ensure students and families receive consistent immunization services across the province;
* ensure school aged children in targeted grades receive the vaccines they are eligible for;
* Encourage uptake of immunizations;
* Measure and evaluate school immunization coverage rates; and
* Ensure immunization records are accurate and documentation is accurate.

1. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations, and if so, what is the process?

There is no exclusion for students not being up-to-date with immunization at school entry

Exclusion may be required based on the transmission dynamics of specific diseases and is recommended based on an individual assessment of risk; this includes the nature of the exposure, their immunization history and if other interventions are available (e.g. prophylaxis). For example, cases of measles would be on isolation while communicable. Individuals with high risk exposures may be advised that isolation is recommended or required based on symptom monitoring, or during the risk period for transmission which may be before symptom onset.

A teacher or principal of a school may exclude from school any pupil who is infected with or is suspected to be infected with a communicable disease per the Saskatchewan *Public Health Act*, 1994 44(1).Not aware of issues of non-compliance related to diseases at high risk of transmission in school settings.

1. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?

Ministry of Education downloads student information to Panorama, the immunization database. PHNs review the target grades (Grades 6 and 8 as well as grade 1). Consent are sent home through the school with the student outlining which vaccines the student is due/eligible for. If consents are not returned PHNs will attempt contact with parents/guardians to advise the student is delayed or eligible for immunization and obtain consent over the phone.

There have also been discussions with the Ministry of Education regarding promotion of use of Kids Boost Immunity in schools to encourage immunization.

1. Has your province / territory realized achievements in this area and/or faced challenges?

Not aware of any challenges

1. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.

Not aware of any joint communications

**Appendix I: Yukon**

1. Does your province / territory have a set of required immunizations that school-aged children are expected to have received before entering school, and if so, what mechanisms for compliance are used? Please add plan description / link if available.
   * Pre K immunizations are recommended, not mandatory, therefore no compliance mechanism.
   * The Pre-K recommended immunizations are at: <https://yukonimmunization.ca/diseases-vaccines/pre-k-health-fair>
2. Is there a process by which students may be suspended or excluded from school if they do not have the required immunizations and vaccinations, and if so, what is the process?
   * No, not in Yukon. Immunizations are recommended, information is made available, promotional/informational campaigns through collaboration between Education and Public Health are coordinated to inform school aged children and their families of immunizations and their benefits.
3. How do school boards/schools and boards of health/public health units work together to promote immunization uptake and follow-up with parents and caregivers about missed immunizations for children?
   * Collaboration between Education and Health occur via information and promotional campaigns. For example, a Pre-K Health Fair takes place annually. This is promoted from Public Health, to Education/Early Learning and on to families/caregivers. Similarly grades 6/7 and 9/10 school based immunization programs are promoted and students/parents are informed via school letters, emails and information from Public Health.
   * Grade 9/10 program: Efforts will be first made to obtain parental/representative consent. If a student presents with or without parent/representative consent, it is the health care provider’s professional responsibility to inform them about their right to provide consent on their own behalf despite the consent/refusal to consent given by the parent(s). See Care and Consent Act, Yukon, 2003.
4. Has your province / territory issued joint communications on this issue from Health and Education ministries? If so, please share.
   * No information on regular reporting in this area by both Health and Education departments in Yukon.
   * 2012 publication: Yukon 2012 Health Status Report Focus on Children and Youth by Yukon Health and Social Services.

1. The table provides quick-access data; the full results from each province / territory are shown in the appendices. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)