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TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers  
 FROM: Sarah Royce, MD, MPH  
 SUBJECT: New School Immunization Requirements Reminder

**Background**

California school immunization entry requirements change effective July 1, 2019. This communication summarizes information related to the new requirements, medical exemptions, and tips your practice can take to prepare.

**New School Immunization Requirements**

Under the California School Immunization Law (California Health and Safety Code, Sections 120325-120375), to protect the public’s health, children are required to receive certain recommended childhood immunizations in order to attend public and private elementary and secondary schools. Note, although not all *recommended* immunizations are required for school, VFC providers are *required to offer all age-appropriate vaccines*—including flu—to the populations they serve.

Effective July 1, 2019, changes in the school immunization law include:

- Requiring 2 (rather than 1) doses of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine at
  - Kindergarten entry
  - 7th grade advancement
  - K-12 admission or transfer
- Requiring 2 Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) doses and 3 Hepatitis B vaccine doses at admission or transfer more uniformly throughout K-12

This table displays the immunization dose requirements for schools:

GRADE	NUMBER OF DOSES REQUIRED OF EACH IMMUNIZATION				
K-12 Admission	4 Polio	5 DTaP	3 Hep B	2 MMR	2 Varicella
(7th-12th)	1 Tdap				
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Advancement	1 Tdap			2 Varicella	



### **Medical Exemptions**

Effective July 1, 2019, medical exemptions must be signed by a California-licensed MD or DO and include:

- The specific nature of the physical condition or medical circumstance of the child for which the licensed physician does not recommend immunization.
- Each specific required vaccine that is being exempted.
- Whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary.
- If the exemption is temporary, an expiration date no more than 12 calendar months from the date of signing.

CDPH has not issued a standardized medical exemption form.

### **Prepare your Practice**

Act now to ensure your patients are protected and are ready for school entry next fall by taking the following steps:

- Give other recommended immunizations: Tdap, meningococcal conjugate, HPV, influenza, and any catch-up doses of MMR and hepatitis B.
- Make reminder and recall phone calls and send notices to patients who have not yet received two doses of chickenpox vaccine, or who are missing other required vaccines.
- Provide your patients clear and accurate documentation of varicella immunization. If you use the California Immunization Registry, consider printing out a copy of the 'Blue Card' after chickenpox vaccine has been given for the student to take to school.
- Post electronic banners on your practice's website to help notify your patients.
- Never miss an opportunity to immunize your patients, including sports physicals and visits for mild illness or injury.

### **Prepare your Vaccine Supply**

Consider the following as you prepare your clinic's upcoming vaccine request:

- Order enough varicella vaccine, and other adolescent catch-up vaccines to immunize your age-eligible patients.
- Place your order with enough time to allow VFC to review and approve your order, for vaccines to ship.
- Varicella vaccines usually take up to 15 business days to arrive once your order is approved. Urgent or rushed orders cannot be done for this product.
- Before ordering vaccines, ensure you have adequate storage for your orders.

### **Resources**

[Guide to Immunizations Required for School Entry \(IMM-231\)](#)

[Vaccine Catch-Up for School Kids Age 7+ \(IMM-1265\)](#)

[California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Division 1, Chapter 4](#)

[Automated Phone Script \(Provider to Patients\)](#)

Visit [ShotsForSchool.org](http://ShotsForSchool.org) for more information and resources on school entry requirements.