

Immunization Program



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Schools and Child Care/Preschool Facilities: FAQs for Immunization Requirements during COVID-19

Several questions have come up lately regarding immunization requirements for schools and child care/preschool facilities during this COVID-19 situation. Please see the questions and ADHS answers below:



Q: Will ADHS be allowing any type of extension or "grace/leniency period" for when immunization records are due for children to attend school or to assist school staff when collecting immunization records for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: No. The Immunization Program at the Arizona Department of Health Services is aware of and appreciates the concern schools may have regarding the ability of students to receive/obtain their school required vaccinations as well as the ability for school staff to review student immunization records due to challenges related to COVID-19. We understand that

schools are asking about a leniency period or form of exception to the [Arizona Revised Statute \(ARS 15-872\)](#) which requires students to provide documentary proof of immunizations or immunity to the diseases to schools *prior* to attendance/entry into school (for K-12 grades).

School immunization requirements found in Arizona Revised Statutes and the [Arizona Administrative Code](#) have not been waived or rescinded in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a result, the Department continues to ask schools to review immunizations at enrollment and up until the time your facility opens for school and refer those students who still lack the required immunizations, using the Immunization Screening and Referral Forms (for [K-12](#) and [Child Care](#)), and providing them with a "due by" date when the vaccines will be needed.

Because up-to-date vaccination is critical to preventing disease in our communities the Department suggests you work with your district officials and/or your legal counsel to determine if or how long a vaccination extension would be allowed in your district based on current law.

Q: If children are enrolled and opting to attend their school via the online option must they still submit immunization records to the school?

A: Yes. Any child enrolled in a public, charter, or private school must submit documentation of requirement immunizations or a valid ADHS exemption form prior to entry or attendance at school. To clarify, if the school has always been a 'brick and mortar' school, and the child is enrolled in that 'brick and mortar' school, but is doing the online version of school due to

COVID, the immunization requirements are to remain per statute/rule. If the school has always been an online or alternative school we address that in our [Arizona Immunization Handbook, pg 11](#). With the combination of hybrid options available, schools should ensure children are ready to return in-person at any time, and up-to-date immunization records are a part of that process.

Q: Will there be any changes to the annual Immunization Data Report (IDR), typically due November 15th?

A: No. The dates of when the IDR is due are set in statute and rule, so ADHS plans to open the 2020 IDR application in early September and schools and child care facilities are asked to submit the report NLT than November 15, 2020. All IDR information, instructions and links to the application will be posted on the [Immunization Program IDR webpage](#).

We understand this will be a very unique school year and while we do not want to put more burden on schools, or create barriers to vaccination or education, schools are still required to follow the current immunization regulations that are in place. We ask that schools and child care/preschool facilities do the best they can to follow the requirements as stated.

Schools and child care/preschool facilities are encouraged to review the updated documents on the [Child Care, School & College webpage](#), particularly the Handbook, the new Vaccine Catch-up Flowcharts & FAQs, and the new 2020-2021 Guides to required school immunizations. For school and child care/preschool immunization questions, please contact the Arizona Immunization Program Office at 602-364-3630 and ask for a nurse consultation.

Arizona Immunization Program Office

[150 N 18th Ave., Suite 120](#)

[Phoenix, AZ 85007](#)

Phone: 602-364-3630

Fax: 602-364-3276