



ISPA Based Enforcement and Maintenance Plan 2024-2025: A Communication Guide for School Boards

WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY
HEALTH UNIT

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Background

Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)

Vaccines are the safest and most efficient way to guard against communicable diseases and prevent outbreaks. [The Immunization of School Pupils Act \(ISPA\)](#) R.S.O. 1990 requires that specified vaccines be received by a child to attend school (JK to Grade 12) in Ontario. Under the ISPA, students must be immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, meningococcal, varicella and polio, or have a valid Medical, Conscience or Religious Belief exemption on file with their local Public Health Unit (PHU).

PHUs are responsible for documenting and reviewing the immunization records of children attending school to ensure they are up to date. PHU staff do this by working with local school staff, health care providers, and families. Every school year, the Windsor Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) reviews the immunization information on file for elementary and secondary school students in our region. Families of students found to have incomplete immunization information are contacted. Together, this work helps keep children and the public protected from vaccine-preventable illnesses and helps PHU staff prevent and manage disease outbreaks in our community.

Primary care providers are a vital source of vaccinations for children; however they are not required to report immunizations they have administered to their local public health unit. Based on the ISPA, parents/legal guardians of school age children are required to report immunizations to their local PHU.

Current Outstanding ISPA Immunization Data

As of November 1, 2024, there are more than 11,000 students attending schools in Windsor and Essex County that are either overdue for one or more of the ISPA required vaccines, or updated immunization information has not yet been submitted to the WECHU. A student immunization notice was generated for every student in the birth cohort years between 2007 and 2020 (elementary/secondary) with incomplete immunization information in the provincial database.

Catch-up Immunization Clinics

The WECHU is hosting catch-up immunization clinics for eligible students from December 2024 to March 2025 to service families with children born between 2007 and 2020; with a priority given to families that do not have a primary health care provider. Families will be able to book an appointment at either the WECHU's Windsor (1005 Ouellette Ave.) or Leamington office (33 Princess St.). Parents/legal guardians can book an appointment for their child either by phone at 519-258-2146 ext. 1222 or online at wechu.org/getimmunized.

Voicemail or E-mail Scripts

The following communications can be shared with families through email, as a pre-recorded phone message (e.g., Synervoice), or used as a school or board office on-hold message. Feel free to adapt the script to meet your needs.

Good morning / afternoon,

This message is for families of students in junior kindergarten to grade 12. The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) has issued immunization notices to students with incomplete immunization records. Please note, the WECHU is requesting that you take prompt action to avoid unnecessary time away from school.

If your child has received a recent immunization as part of the routine immunizations required to attend school, please make sure to update their records online at i-m-m-u-n-e-dot-w-e-c-h-u-dot-o-r-g.

The health unit is hosting immunization clinics at its Windsor and Leamington offices for families who are unable to access missing vaccines through a community health care provider. To book an appointment, visit w-e-c-h-u-dot-o-r-g-forward-slash-g-e-t-i-m-m-u-n-i-z-e-d or call 519-258-2146 extension 1222.

Thank you for your continued efforts in keeping our school community healthy and safe!

Good morning / afternoon,

Parents and families are reminded to update their child's immunization records. Updating student records is easy and only takes a few minutes. Parents and legal guardians might need to find this information when a child needs emergency treatment or when they register their child for summer camp or other children's programs. Students may also need immunization information when applying to summer jobs or post-secondary school programs.

Immunization information may be needed for travel to another country. Updating your child's immunization records with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit ensures the information is current and keeps it all in one spot.

There are many ways to update your child's immunization records with the health unit. You can update records securely online at i-m-m-u-n-e-dot-w-e-c-h-u-dot-o-r-g. You will need your child's health card number and a copy of their recent immunization record (which may be noted on a yellow card). The immunization records submitted through this website will be

reviewed to assess requirements for attending school as outlined in Immunization of Schools Pupil Act, 1990 (ISPA). Families can also contact the health unit at 519-258-2146 extension 1222 or visit one of their offices in person to report immunizations.

Social Media Posts

If your school or parent council group have a social media presence or other method of communication, consider sharing the following generic messages. The WECHU will be sharing weekly posts on its social media channels from November 2024 to April 2025. Please boost WECHU's posts by liking or re-sharing messages to expand the reach.

FYI - Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for updating @TheWECHU every time their child receives immunizations given by their health care provider. The health care provider does not report these to the Health Unit. You can report [online](#) or call 519-258-2146 ext. 1222.

Has your child received an immunization from their health care provider recently? Remember to notify @TheWECHU by updating your child's immunization records [online](#) or by calling 519-258-2146 ext. 1222. The health care provider is not required to report these to the Health Unit.

Attention Parents/Legal Guardians! Is your child's immunization record up-to-date? If your child received an immunization from a health care provider, @TheWECHU needs to be notified. It's quick and easy to do [online](#) or by calling 519-258-2146 ext. 1222.

Web Content

If your school has a website and/or a page dedicated to immunization, consider posting the following content. Alternatively, feel free to direct clients to the WECHU's website at wechu.org/your-health/immunization/immunization-requirements-school.

ISPA Vaccine Eligibility and Appointment Booking

Student Immunization Catch-up Clinics

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) is now hosting catch-up immunization clinics for eligible students.

Booking an Appointment

Immunization appointments are at the WECHU's Windsor office (1005 Ouellette Ave) or the Leamington office (33 Princess St.). Appointments are required and can be booked online at wechu.org/getimmunized or by phone at 519-258-2146 ext. 1222.

To book an appointment online, you will need:

- Your contact information;
- A phone number; and
- An email address.

Updating Immunization Records

If the student has already received their missing immunizations or has updated immunization documents (e.g., vaccine record, medical/conscience or religious belief exemption forms), please submit this information to the WECHU. It is important to report this information to ensure their permanent immunization record kept by the Health Unit is up to date.

Ways to Obtain/Report Updated Immunization Information to The WECHU	
Secure Online Reporting	immune.wechu.org
Phone	519-258-2146 ext. 1222 1-800-265-5822 ext. 1222 (toll-free)
Fax	519-258-7288

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the WECHU at 519-258-2146 ext. 1222 or via e-mail at cs@wechu.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why does the Health Unit review student immunization records?

- By law, the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) R.S.O.1990 (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90i01>) requires public health units to maintain and review immunization records for every student attending school in their region. The local Health Unit is also required to contact parents/legal guardians of students who have incomplete immunization records.
- To protect community health and well-being, public health units in Ontario are required to enforce school suspension on students who have not yet received mandated vaccines according to the ISPA . (https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/docs/Publicly_Funded_ImmunizationSchedule.pdf).

2. Why did my child receive an immunization notice?

- The Health Unit has not yet received an immunization record showing the student has the required vaccines to attend school. This could be the case even if the child is up to date on their immunizations.
- Under the ISPA, parents/legal guardians are required to provide their local public health unit with immunization records. Health care providers and schools are not required to do this.

- A vaccine the student received may not meet the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act or the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario (e.g., the vaccine was given too early).

3. My health care provider vaccinated my child. Don't they send the information to the Health Unit?

If your child received an immunization(s) from their health care provider, they need to be reported to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. Health care providers are not required to update this information with their local Health Unit. You can request that your health care provider send updated immunization records to the WECHU.

4. My family doesn't have a health care provider. What do I do?

- If your child is missing required vaccines, you can book an immunization appointment with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) (<https://www.wechu.org/getimmunized>) or call 519-258-2146, ext. 1222.
- Many local walk-in clinics also provide routine immunizations.
- You can also visit the WECHU's website (<https://www.wechu.org/your-health/find-doctor>) for information about finding a health care provider.

5. What if I choose not to immunize my child?

You must have a valid Conscience or Religious Belief or Medical exemption on file at the WECHU. Visit our website to learn about exemptions: <https://www.wechu.org/your-health/immunization> or contact the WECHU at 519-258-2146, ext. 1222.

6. What if my child has an exemption?

Your child should not have received a suspension order if you have a valid exemption on file with the WECHU. Please contact the WECHU at 519-258-2146, ext. 1222 to verify your child's records.

7. What happens if I do not provide the required information to the Health Unit?

- The deadline for **elementary** students (junior kindergarten to grade 8) to provide missing immunization information to the WECHU is **Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 6 pm**. After the deadline, students whose immunizations records have not been updated with the WECHU will be suspended from school for up to 20 days starting on **Monday, March 3, 2025**.
- The deadline for **secondary** students (grades 9-12) to provide missing immunization information to the WECHU is **Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 6 pm**. After the deadline, students whose immunizations records have not been updated with the WECHU will be suspended from school for up to 20 days starting on **Monday, March 17, 2025**.
- Suspended students can return to school once their records are up to date with the WECHU, or they have submitted a valid exemption (Medical or Conscience or Religious Belief).

8. How do I report my child's vaccinations?

You can report your child's immunizations to the WECHU in the following ways:

- Online at <https://immune.wechu.org/>
- Call the Health Unit at 519-258-2146 ext. 1222
- Fax the record or have your health care provider to fax 519-258-7288.

Note: you do not need to report your child's COVID-19 immunizations to the Health Unit.

9. What if my child's record is in another language?

If your child has an immunization record in a language other than English or French, please have the record translated and bring the translated record to the Health Unit. Here are some services that may help:

- Multicultural Council (MCC) of Windsor-Essex translates immunization records for a fee; this service takes between 4 to 6 weeks. A nurse practitioner from the MCC also provides student immunizations. For more information, visit <https://themcc.com/> or call 519-255-1127.
- New Canadians' Centre for Excellence translates immunization records for free; this service takes between 4 to 6 weeks. For more information, visit <https://www.ncceinc.org/> or call 519-258-4076.
- VON Immigrant Health Clinic provides free translation of immunization records that are in Latin letters or Arabic languages; this service takes about 1 to 2 weeks. Vaccines can be administered to students who are clients of their clinic. For more information, visit <https://von.ca/en/service-categories/health-community> or call 519-916-4370.

If have questions, contact cs@wechu.org or 519-258-2146 extension 1222. For more information about immunizations, visit www.wechu.org/your-health/immunization/your-childs-immunization-record.



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