
July 22, 2019

Dear School Administrator or Health Office Personnel,

We write you today to request your continued support in promoting the importance of up-to-date vaccination within your school community. Arizona vaccine coverage among school-age children in Arizona **continues to decline**, putting our state at increased risk of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak.

Vaccines are a critical public health tool to keep Arizona children, families, and communities healthy. At the beginning of the 20th century, large numbers of infectious diseases like smallpox, measles, polio, whooping cough, and diphtheria caused thousands of illnesses and deaths, but the availability of vaccines have now made these diseases rare. For their role in preventing needless illness and death, vaccines are recognized as the greatest public health achievements of both the 20th and 21st centuries.

Vaccines are safe and effective. While some parents you encounter may argue against this fact, the science is clear: vaccines are among the most studied medical products in the world and are **continuously monitored** for safety and effectiveness. When your students (and staff) are fully vaccinated, they are less likely to become ill with a vaccine-preventable disease and thus less likely to spread disease to other students, staff, and families on your campus who are unable to be vaccinated due to their age or a compromising medical condition.

As the new school year approaches, we ask for your support in helping us ensure your students are fully vaccinated. Whether you are a school administrator, school nurse, front office staff, or teacher, there are ways you can help support the health of your school community:

- Be familiar with and abide by the Arizona **laws** (Arizona Revised Statute §15-871 - §15-874) and **regulations** (Arizona Administrative Code Title 9, Chapter 6, Article 7) for school immunization.
- Support your health office personnel as they work with parents to comply with the laws and regulations, including exclusion of students from school without documented proof of immunity or exemption (Arizona Revised Statutes §15-872(B)).
- Post your school's **vaccine coverage and exemption rates** on your website.
- Encourage school health offices or front office staff to provide **vaccine education materials** for parents.
- Participate in the online **Immunization Education Course** pilot program.
- Discourage parents from signing an exemption form out of convenience rather than providing documentation of immunization. Staff can direct parents to their healthcare provider or the Arizona Department of Health Services for a copy of their child's immunization records.

[Share the One-Pager](#)

We greatly appreciate everything you and your staff do to ensure students are safe, healthy, and ready to learn.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hoffman
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education

Dr. Cara Christ
Director
Arizona Department of Health Services

Further Information:

Immunization coverage continues to decline:

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/index.php#reports-immunization-coverage>

Vaccines are a critical public health tool:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html>

History of vaccines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056803.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6019a5.htm>

Safety of vaccines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/vaccine-decision/index.html#vaccine-safety>

Arizona laws and regulations regarding vaccines:

<https://www.azleg.gov/arsDetail/?title=15>

https://apps.azsos.gov/public_services/Title_09/9-06.pdf

Find your school's vaccination coverage and exemption rate to post on your website:

<https://apps.azdhs.gov/IDRREportStats>

Vaccine resources for parents:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/resources/index.html>

Immunization education course:

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/index.php#immunization-education-course>