



What is the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)?

ISPA is Ontario legislation that helps to protect school-age (elementary and secondary school) children from serious diseases which are designated under that Act. The designated diseases under the ISPA are measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, pertussis, meningococcal, and varicella (chicken pox)*.

*varicella vaccine is required only for children born in 2010 or later.

Roles and Responsibilities

Day-to-day

School Administrators

As per Regulation 645 under the ISPA, principals/school operators of both public and private schools must:

- Provide student information as requested by the local Medical Officer of Health.
- Assist SEPH in dissemination of important vaccination and public health information.
- Redirect any copies of immunization records received by the school to public health.

After ISPA notices go out

School Administrators

School administration (principals) must:

- Enforce any suspension orders that SEPH issues under the authority of the ISPA. A blank copy of the Suspension Order will be provided to the school, along with the names of students to be suspended.
- A suspension under the ISPA means that the student may not physically attend school; an in-school suspension is not an option.
- Students are to be suspended for up to 20 school days, or until a complete record or valid exemption is reported to SEPH and a Rescind Order is issued.
- Allow student to return to school when notified by SEPH. SEPH will provide a Rescind Order to the school and to the parent/guardian.

Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians of school-aged children must:

- Ensure the child is up to date with their required immunizations.
- Submit a copy of each child's immunization record to SEPH when the child starts school.
- Ensure the child's immunization record is updated each time the child receives an immunization.

Most health-care providers do not send immunization records to public health. This is the parent/guardian's responsibility.

Parents/Guardians

If a parent or guardian receives an Immunization Notice from SEPH, this means that public health does not have all the records of required immunizations for their child in the provincial immunization system. Parents and guardians must:

- Submit the child's immunization record to SEPH before the deadline in the notice.
 - » If an up-to-date immunization record is not submitted by the deadline in the notice, the student may be suspended from school for up to 20 days.
 - » If the child is not immunized for medical or conscientious reasons, the appropriate exemption process must be followed prior to the suspension deadline.
- Book an appointment to receive any required immunizations that the student is missing as soon as possible and report new immunizations to SEPH before the deadline.

Day-to-day

Health-Care Providers

Health-care providers must:

- Provide an updated immunization record to the parent/guardian every time they immunize a school-aged child.
- Instruct parents/guardians to provide updated immunization record to public health.

After ISPA notices go out

Health-Care Providers

During ISPA enforcement, health-care providers are asked to:

- Prepare for an increase in requests for appointments for immunizations for school-aged children prior to the ISPA deadline to prevent students being suspended from school.
- Order sufficient vaccine supply to meet the anticipated need.
- Be prepared for an increase in requests for copies of immunization records and plan to make the records accessible to parents.

SEPH will inform health-care providers of key deadlines related to ISPA implementation for schools in their area.

SEPH will be providing additional immunization clinics for school-aged children who are not able to access their health-care provider within the timelines for completion.

Southeast Public Health (SEPH)

Public Health Units in Ontario must:

- Maintain and review records of immunization for each pupil attending school in the area served by the Medical Officer of Health.

Southeast Public Health (SEPH)

Each school year, SEPH:

- Reviews submitted immunization records.
- Sends ISPA notifications to parents/guardians of students who do not have the required immunizations or a valid exemption on file. The notification includes what is missing from the students record and a deadline to submit the missing information.
- Sends an Order of Suspension from the Medical Officer of Health to the school principal and to either the parent/guardian of the student under the age of 16, or to the student if they are 16 or older whose records have not been received by the deadline.
 - » Once the circumstances for making the Suspension Order no longer exist, the MOH must rescind the order and provide a written Rescind Order to the school and the parent/student.
- Provides immunization clinics to help students access missing immunizations prior to the deadline in the ISPA notification.

Contact SEPH

For parents/guardians and schools: schoolvaccine@southeastph.ca

For health-care providers: immunizationnursingsupport@southeastph.ca

Links and resources

[Immunization of School Pupils Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.1,](#)

[Publicly funded immunization schedule for Ontario](#)

[Keep our children healthy and our schools disease-free](#)

[Vaccines for children at school](#)

[Immunization Records](#)

