

# Frequently Asked Questions

## General Audit Questions

**Q1: When are school and child care audit reports due to the Department?**

**A:** School audits should be completed and entered in IRIS by **Friday, October 31, 2025**. Licensed child care audits, including preschools, should be completed and entered in IRIS by **Friday, January 30, 2026**.

**Q2: When should school audits begin?**

**A:** School audits should begin after the first day of school to allow time for local public health agencies to conduct audits. Local public health agencies (LPHAs) may begin contacting schools and child care centers at any time to schedule the audit.

**Q3: Who should conduct the audits?**

**A:** It is the duty of the local boards of health to audit the certificates of immunization, certificates of immunization exemption, and provisional certificates of immunization in the schools within their jurisdiction to determine compliance with Iowa code. Head Start and school nurses can assist with preparing immunization records for the audits but should not conduct the audits.

**Q4: Where should LPHAs conduct immunization audits?**

**A:** LPHAs should return to pre-pandemic practices regarding where to conduct audits. While some counties may have implemented the practice of removing records during the COVID-19 pandemic when there was limited access to school grounds and limited LPHA staffing, those issues should not affect the audit at this time. Additionally, removing original immunization certificates from the school to conduct the audit may raise confidentiality and other concerns.

**Q5: Do all student records need to be reviewed every year?**

**A:** No, previously audited records do not need to be reviewed every year. Routinely, when LPHAs audit student records, the certificate is marked to indicate the record has been audited and meets immunization requirements. When this has occurred, the record only needs to be re-evaluated when vaccines are required for entry into additional grades (e.g., 7<sup>th</sup> grade - Tdap vaccine, 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade - Meningococcal vaccine).

**Q6: If a child transfers from an Iowa school to another Iowa school, does their immunization record need to be re-audited?**

**A:** If a student transfers from one Iowa school to another, even if the schools are in different counties, records marked as previously audited by a local public health agency do not need to be audited again. The reviewer would only need to evaluate the record for compliance with immunization requirements for additional grades as necessary (e.g., Tdap and Meningococcal vaccine).

**Q7: What if a student has not received all the required vaccines prior to the start of school?**

**A:** If the student has not received all the required vaccines prior to the start of school, the child shall be excluded from the benefits, activities, and opportunities of the school until a valid Certificate of Immunization or exemption is submitted.

Students who have received at least one dose of each of the required immunizations may attend school by submitting a Provisional Certificate of Immunization. A provisional certificate is valid for 60 days and allows time for the child to receive additional vaccine doses. At the end of the provisional period, a Certificate of Immunization including all the required vaccines must be submitted to the child care or school the child is enrolled or attempting to enroll.

**Q8: After the audit, do LPHA staff need to re-audit provisional certificates to ensure students are immunized by the end of the 60 day provisional period or verify students with invalid or no certificate are compliant?**

**A:** No, LPHA staff do not need to re-audit Provisional certificates or records for students with an invalid certificate or no certificate during the same school year. It is the duty of the admitting official to ensure a valid certificate is on file for each student in their schools (Iowa Administrative Code (IAC 641-7.8(1))). It shall be the duty of the admitting official to deny enrollment to students who do not comply with requirements for proof of immunization or immunization exemption (IAC 641-7.10). All provisional certificates must be maintained by the admitting official until a certificate of immunization has been submitted (IAC 641-7.7(6)). At the end of a provisional enrollment period, if an enrollee has not submitted a certificate of immunization, the admitting official shall immediately exclude the applicant from the benefits, activities and opportunities of the school until the applicant submits a valid certificate of immunization (IAC 641-7.7(5)).

**Q9: How do I audit certificates for homeless students per the McKinney-Vento Act?**

**A:** These students should be audited like any other student. McKinney-Vento Act requires immediate enrollment, even if students are unable to produce immunization or other required health records, recognizing that families and youth who are homeless are frequently unable to obtain and keep copies of records [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)]. Additional information available on the [Iowa Department of Education, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Resources](#) webpage.

**Q10: How long should Local Public Health Agencies maintain School and Child Care Immunization audit records?**

**A:** Iowa HHS recommends maintaining audit documents for three years.

**Q11: Where can I learn more about the changes to Iowa Administrative Code 641, Chapter 7 because of Executive Order 10?**

**A:** Additional information can be found in the [Executive Order 10 - Letter to Partners](#) and [Executive Order 10 - Frequently Asked Questions](#).

## General Immunization Certificate Questions

### Q12: What proof of immunization is required for enrollment in Iowa schools?

**A:** To attend school or licensed child care, the child needs one of the following: a Certificate of Immunization, Provisional Certificate of Immunization, or Certificate of Immunization Exemption. A brief explanation of each certificate is included below.

- **Certificate of Immunization** - Issued when applicant has a record of age-appropriate immunizations that meet the requirement for licensed child care or school enrollment.
- **Provisional Certificate of Immunization** - Issued when the applicant has received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines but has not completed all required immunizations or is a transfer student from another U.S. school system.
- **Certificate of Immunization Exemption - Medical** - Iowa law allows for medical exemption to immunization when required immunizations would be injurious to the health and well-being of the applicant or any member of the applicant's family or household or required vaccine would violate minimum interval spacing.
- **Certificate of Immunization Exemption - Religious** - Iowa law allows for religious exemption to immunization when immunizations conflict with a genuine and sincere religious belief, and is not based merely on philosophical, scientific, moral, personal or medical opposition to immunizations.

More information regarding immunization certificates is available on the [Immunization Program webpage](#).

### Q13: What is the current version of the Certificate of Immunization?

**A:** The Certificate of Immunization form has an effective date of July 1, 2024. The updated version of the Certificate of Immunization, dated July 2024, is available on the [Immunization webpage](#). Certificates can be ordered on the [Immunization Materials Order Form webpage](#).

### Q14: Are previous versions of the immunization certificate valid or do students need the most current version of the certificate?

**A:** Previous versions of the immunization certificates remain valid, and student records do not need to be updated when versions change. If a new student enrolling in school or child care for the first time submits a previous version of the Certificate of Immunization Exemption, the certificate is valid. Although the most current version of the certificate is preferred, it is not required.

### Q15: Is an out of state Certificate of Immunization or exemption valid?

**A:** No, certificates from other states are not valid. To attend school or licensed child care, the child needs one of the following issued by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services: Certificate of Immunization, Provisional Certificate of Immunization, or Certificate of Immunization Exemption.

## Certificate of Immunization

**Q16: Is the school nurse allowed to sign the Certificate of Immunization for students?**

**A:** Yes, school nurses are allowed to sign the Certificate of Immunization if the record indicates a child is up-to-date on all school entry immunization requirements.

**Q17: Does the Certificate of Immunization have to be generated from IRIS? Can they be handwritten?**

**A:** Iowa Administrative Code 641—7.6(139A) specifies: "To be valid, the certificate shall be the certificate of immunization issued by the department, a computer-generated copy from the immunization registry, or a certificate of immunization that has been approved in writing by the department." It is acceptable for a student or child enrolling in school or licensed child care to have a handwritten [Certificate of Immunization](#) or [Provisional Certificate of Immunization](#) rather than an IRIS generated certificate or [Alternative Certificate of Immunization](#).

**Q18: The new immunization certificate has a line for the doctor, PA, nurse, or CMA to print their name, and below it is the signature line. Are both required to be completed for the certificate to be valid?**

**A:** Per [Iowa Immunization Administrative Code - Chapter 7](#), the signature of the physician, physician assistant, nurse, or certified medical assistant is required for the certificate to be valid. The printed name is not included in Chapter 7, so it is not required for the certificate to be valid. Previous versions of the Certificate of Immunization can still be accepted, which do not contain the printed name line.

**Q19: Is a stamped name acceptable for the printed name and/or signature?**

**A:** A stamped name would be acceptable for the printed name and a stamped signature would be acceptable for the signature. Per [Iowa Immunization Administrative Code - Chapter 7](#), "Signature" means an original signature or the authorized use of a stamped signature or electronic signature.

**Q20: For students without an immunization record but have laboratory confirmed immunity (titers), does the student still need to have documented vaccinations?**

**A:** Per Iowa Code, there are two instances when labs could be used in lieu of vaccinations:

**Measles/Rubella:** 2 doses of measles/rubella-containing vaccine; ***or the applicant demonstrates a positive antibody test for measles and rubella from a U.S. laboratory.***

**Varicella:** 2 doses of varicella-containing vaccine, ***unless the applicant has a reliable history of natural disease.***

**Q21: Does the immunization law allow for the 4-day "grace period"?**

**A:** Since 2009, the law allows vaccine doses administered up to 4 days before the minimum interval or age to be counted as valid. The 4-day "grace period" should not be applied to the 28-day interval between two different live virus vaccines (e.g., MMR and Varicella) if not administered at the same visit.

**Q22: Language stating "Polio vaccines is not required for persons 18 years of age or older" was removed from the Immunization Requirements table. Do students 18 years of age and older need to complete the polio series?**

**A:** Yes. On June 21, 2023, ACIP issued an inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) recommendation for all adults known or suspected to be unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated against polio. Students are required to have 4 doses of polio, with at least 1 dose received on or after 4 years of age, or 3 doses if the third dose was received on or after 4 years of age. Doses of oral polio vaccine (OPV) administered on or after April 1, 2016 are not valid doses and do not count toward the polio vaccine requirement. Previously audited records do not need to be re-audited.

**Q23: Has the COVID-19 vaccine been added as a required vaccine for school enrollment?**

**A:** No, the COVID-19 vaccine has not been added to the immunization requirements for students attending licensed child care, elementary and secondary schools.

**Q24: A family has established care with a healthcare provider outside of Iowa. Are immunization certificates valid when signed by a healthcare provider who does not hold an Iowa license?**

**A:** No, immunization certificates must be signed by the appropriate Iowa licensed healthcare provider. For instances when healthcare providers are not licensed in Iowa, the family may have a certificate signed by an Iowa licensed healthcare provider in their current health system or have an appropriate healthcare provider in an Iowa local public health agency sign the certificate.

**Q25: Do immunization records from other immunization information systems or forms from other states count as the Certificate of Immunization?**

**A:** To be valid, the certificate shall be the certificate of immunization issued by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, a computer-generated copy from the immunization registry, or a certificate of immunization, which has been approved in writing by the department. The [Statement of Approval for Alternative Certificate of Immunization](#) outlines providers and clinics that meet the requirements of Iowa Administrative Code.

## Provisional Certificate of Immunization

**Q26: Can a Provisional Certificate of Immunization be completed at the time of the audit?**

**A:** During the audit, a school nurse or local public health nurse may sign a Certificate of Immunization or issue a Provisional Certificate of Immunization. *However, for audit purposes, certificates signed during the audit should not be counted as a valid immunization certificate.*

**Q27: When does the Provisional period begin?**

**A:** Per [Iowa Immunization Administrative Code - Chapter 7](#): “The amount of time allowed for provisional enrollment shall be as soon as medically feasible but shall not exceed 60 calendar days. **The period of provisional enrollment shall begin on the date the provisional certificate is signed.** The person signing the provisional certificate shall assign an expiration date to the certificate and shall indicate the remaining immunizations required to qualify for a certificate of immunization.”

**Q28: Can a provisional enrollment be extended beyond 60 days?**

**A:** The time allowed for provisional enrollment is as soon as medically feasible to complete the immunization requirements but shall not exceed 60 calendar days. Additional Provisional Certificates may be issued at the end of the 60-day provisional enrollment only if the applicant has not completed the required immunizations due to minimum interval requirements. The longest minimum interval between 2 doses of required vaccines for school enrollment is 6 months; therefore, it is generally unnecessary to have multiple provisional certificates issued for a single student. If a Certificate of Immunization is not submitted at the end of the 60-day provisional period, the child shall be excluded from the benefits, activities, and opportunities of the school or licensed child care center until a valid Certificate of Immunization is submitted.

**Q29: Can a Provisional Certificate of Immunization be issued for immigrants, refugees, or foreign exchange students who have not received all required immunizations to attend school or licensed child care centers?**

**A:** A Provisional Certificate of Immunization may be issued to a transfer student from another country if the student has received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines. If at least one dose of each vaccine is not on file for the applicant, the record shall be counted as invalid for auditing purposes. If the child does not have a valid certificate, they shall be excluded from the benefits, activities, and opportunities of the school until a valid Certificate of Immunization is submitted.

**Q30: What is the definition of a transfer student? Does a student transferring from one Iowa school to another constitute a transfer student?**

**A:** Per [Iowa Immunization Administrative Code - Chapter 7](#): “To qualify for provisional enrollment, applicants shall have received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines or be a transfer student from another school system. **A transfer student is an applicant seeking enrollment from one United States elementary or secondary school into another.**” Iowa Administrative Code does not distinguish between in state and out of state transfer students. It is permissible for a transfer student from one Iowa elementary or secondary school to another Iowa elementary or secondary school to receive a Provisional certificate. This 60-day provisional period would allow students to attend school while immunization records are transferred from one school to another.

If a new student was not previously enrolled in a U.S. elementary or secondary school, then they would not meet the transfer student criteria. The transfer definition as outlined in Code for Provisional Certificates is not applicable to preschool or licensed child care students.

**Q31: A transfer student’s immunization record arrives at school during the provisional enrollment period and the student is missing required immunizations. Should the student be immediately excluded from school?**

**A:** No, the student remains qualified for provisional enrollment until the expiration date of the provisional certificate. If a Certificate of Immunization is not submitted at the end of the 60-day provisional period, the child shall be excluded from the benefits, activities, and opportunities of the school until a valid Certificate of Immunization is submitted. If the student receives additional doses of each required vaccine during the provisional enrollment period and has at least one of each of the required vaccines, an additional Provisional Certificate of Immunization may be issued.

**Q32: Does the Provisional Certificate of Immunization have to be generated from IRIS? Can they be handwritten?**

**A:** It is acceptable for a student or child enrolling in school or licensed child care to have a handwritten [Provisional Certificate of Immunization](#) rather than an IRIS generated certificate.

## Certificate of Immunization Exemption

**Q33: Are photos or photocopies of exemptions acceptable?**

**A:** Yes, photographs or photocopies of Certificates of Immunization Exemptions may be acceptable if all the fields are complete.



**Q34: Is a Certificate of Immunization Exemption for medical purposes valid when signed by a Doctor of Chiropractic?**

**A:** No, a Certificate of Immunization Exemption for medical reasons is valid only when signed by an Iowa licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.), physician assistant or nurse practitioner. The current Certificate of Immunization Exemption includes fields for the healthcare professional to print their name and Iowa medical license number.

**Q35: Can an Iowa licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.), physician assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner sign the medical Certificate of Immunization Exemption for their own child?**

**A:** An Iowa licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.), physician assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) may sign a medical exemption form for their child if the parent is a medical provider for their own child. The parent must have established a patient-provider relationship and completed documentation of treatment and assessment. Additionally, the child must fall within the health care provider's respective population foci.

**Q36: What religions are acceptable for a religious exemption?**

**A:** The Iowa administrative code does not specify religious denominations eligible for a religious immunization exemption. A religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption is valid when completed appropriately. A religious exemption may be granted to a student if the immunization conflicts with a genuine and sincere religious belief and the belief is in fact religious and not based merely on philosophical, scientific, moral, personal, or medical opposition to immunizations.

**Q37: Who is allowed to sign the religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption?**

**A:** To be valid, the religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption requires the signature of the applicant or, if the applicant is a minor, the applicant's parent or guardian. Instances when the applicant is a minor and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services is the guardian, documentation of guardianship must be obtained and attached to the Religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption. Without this documentation, the certificate of exemption is invalid.

**Q38: Are Certificates of Immunization Exemption forms valid if the form has been altered?**

**A:** The validity of the Immunization Exemption Certificates is based on language in Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 7. Language which references code citation cannot be altered. Any edits or alterations to the Medical Certificate of Immunization Exemption or Religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption language referencing Iowa Administrative Code would result in the form being invalid. For a Certificate of Immunization Exemption to be valid, all portions of the form must be completed in its entirety.



**Q39: Previous versions of religious Certificates of Immunization Exemption were notarized. Is the previous version of the religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption valid when notarized by an out-of-state notary?**

**A:** Yes, the previous version of the religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption is valid when notarized by an out-of-state notary. For the 2024-25 school year and beyond, effective July 1, 2024, the notary signature is no longer required. While the new form is preferred, previous versions will be accepted even if the notary signature line is blank.

**Q40: Previous versions of religious Certificates of Immunization Exemption were notarized. The notary's commission on the previous version of the Certificate of Immunization Exemption-Religious is now expired. Does the student need to submit a new certificate of immunization exemption?**

**A:** No, a previously completed religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption with an expired notary commission remains valid. For the 2024-25 school year and beyond, effective July 1, 2024, the notary signature is no longer required. While the new form is preferred, previous versions will be accepted even if the notary signature line is blank.

**Q41: Is a foreign exchange student's host family able to sign a religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption?**

**A:** Many host parents will have the authority to make decisions for treatment in a medical emergency. This does not allow authority for the host parents to sign or request a religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption. Please reference the following link for information from the [US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Exchange Program](#).

**Q42: Is a foreign exchange student's host parents the student's legal guardian?**

**A:** No. The exchange student's natural parents remain legal guardians. The student's exchange program takes legal responsibility during the program. Each exchange student's Certificate of Health contains a medical release form so host parents may secure medical treatment in case of an emergency. If the foreign exchange student requires additional immunizations to attend school, the host family or child should contact the foreign exchange student organization or the foreign exchange student's parents to obtain written consent.

## Licensed Child Care Immunization Audits

**Q43: Where do I find a list of the licensed child care and preschool providers in my county?**

**A:** A list of licensed childcare and preschool providers by county is available through the [Child Care Provider Search](#).

**Q44: Which immunization requirements are used to audit a child's record who is attending a preschool program in a public or private school?**

**A:** Children in preschool, regardless of their age, should be audited according to the [Licensed Child Care Center requirements](#). The Kindergarten - 12<sup>th</sup> grade requirements do not apply until the child enters kindergarten.

**Q45: Do infants enrolled in licensed child care under the age of four (4) months need a Certificate of Immunization on file for Iowa Immunization Requirements?**

**A:** No, infants under four months of age are not counted in the audit and should not be included in the total enrollment number.

**Q46: Do children less than 12 months of age enrolled in a licensed child care center need a Certificate of Immunization on file if they have not completed the primary series of vaccines?**

**A:** Yes, the Iowa Immunization Administrative Code requires a Certificate of Immunization be submitted to the licensed child care center in which the child wishes to enroll. The Certificate of Immunization should be updated to meet the age-appropriate immunization requirements and as children receive additional immunizations.

**Q47: Which immunization requirements are used to audit a child's record who is enrolled in a transitional, developmental or junior kindergarten program in a public or private school?**

**A:** Children in transitional, developmental or junior kindergarten should be audited according to Licensed Child Care Center requirements. The Iowa Immunization Administrative Code defines "*elementary school*" as kindergarten through grade 8. Other types of kindergarten programs such as transitional, developmental or junior kindergarten are not defined in administrative code by the Immunization Program or the Department of Education. These programs may include 4-year-old children who would not have adequate time to receive the required kindergarten vaccines prior to attending school and are audited according to Licensed Child Care Center requirements.

**Q48: If school-age children attend an after school licensed child care program, does the licensed child care center need to have an immunization record on file?**

**A:** Yes, the Iowa Immunization Administrative Code requires a Certificate of Immunization be submitted to the licensed child care center in which the child wishes to enroll. An after school licensed child care center is required to have immunization records on file. The records should be audited according to the [Licensed Child Care Center requirements](#).

**Q49: Can preschool students be issued a Provisional Certificate if they transfer from another US school?**

**A:** The Provisional Certificate may be issued to a student enrolled in school or a child enrolled in licensed child care when the applicant has received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines but has not completed all the required immunizations. However, Iowa Code specifies the definition of a transfer student as “an applicant seeking enrollment from one United States elementary or secondary school into another.” **The transfer definition as outlined in Code for Provisional Certificates is not applicable to preschool or licensed child care students.**

## Home School Students

**Q50: Where should records of home-schooled children be documented?**

**A.** Home-schooled student records should be documented in the Home School row of the corresponding school where the immunization record is maintained (e.g., elementary school). If home-schooled student records are maintained at the school district office, an audit may be submitted for the school district office and would include records for home-schooled children only.

IRIS includes a school district for each district in Iowa in the School Name drop down menu. School districts should not be used to report audit data except for home-schooled student records maintained at the school district office. Regardless of where home-schooled student records are documented for the audit, student records should only be counted in one location.

**Q51: Do immunization records of a child receiving Competent Private Instruction (CPI) need to be audited?**

**A:** The CPI category includes home-schooled children who are not enrolled in independent private instruction and those in non-accredited nonpublic schools. There are two options for a child to enroll in CPI, **Option 1** and **Option 2**. The CPI enrollment option is provided by the school district. All **Option 1** children and **Option 2** children **dually enrolled** with the school district must provide evidence of immunization or exemption. Immunization records for these children must be audited and counted in the Home School row of the corresponding school. Immunization records for CPI/home-schooled children are often maintained in the school district office. Children enrolled under **Option 2 and not dually enrolled** with the school district are not required to submit evidence of immunization. Immunization records for these children are not included in the audit and the children are not counted in the Total Enrollment on the Immunization Record Review.

An additional type of private instruction, **Independent Private Instruction (IPI)**, became effective on July 1, 2013. Children who are home -schooled under IPI are exempt from the immunization requirements. Immunization records for these

children are not included in the audit, and the children are not counted in the Total Enrollment on the Immunization Record Review. For additional information see the [Iowa Department of Education, Private Instruction](#) webpage.

**Q52: If a home-schooled student has submitted immunization records upon initial enrollment in CPI, can a school nurse or auditor request an updated immunization certificate?**

**A:** An immunization certificate is required only upon initial enrollment in CPI option 1 or Dual Enrollment. The Iowa home-school regulations do not provide authorization to require updated immunization information beyond the first submission. Updates can be requested but are not required.

## Tdap Vaccine Requirement

**Q53: What is the Tdap vaccine requirement?**

**A:** Students entering, advancing or transferring into 7th grade or above need proof of an adolescent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) booster immunization (“Tdap”) for school enrollment. This dose must contain the pertussis component to be considered compliant with school entry requirements. A dose of Td (tetanus, diphtheria) does not meet this requirement.

**Q54: What if a student does not have proof of Tdap vaccine before school starts?**

**A:** Students who have received one dose of pediatric diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP) vaccine may attend school by submitting a Provisional Certificate of Immunization. The Provisional Certificate of Immunization is valid for a maximum of 60 days, which allows time for the student to receive the adolescent Tdap vaccine. If the student does not receive the vaccine by the end of the provisional enrollment period, the student shall be excluded from school.

**Q55: Is there a grace period or extension to receive Tdap vaccine after school starts?**

**A:** No, there is no grace period/extension for the Tdap vaccine requirement. All students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade and above need to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization with the Tdap immunization, a Certificate of Immunization Exemption or a Provisional Certificate of Immunization when enrolling in school.

**Q56: If a DTaP has been given instead of a Tdap, will it meet the Tdap vaccine requirement?**

**A:** If a dose of DTaP is inadvertently administered at age 10 years or older, it meets the adolescent Tdap booster vaccine requirement.

**Q57: If a student already has a valid Medical or Religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption on file, is an updated certificate of exemption required for the Tdap vaccine requirement?**

**A:** The Medical Certificate of Immunization Exemption includes a section for the healthcare provider to select which required vaccine(s) the child is exempt from receiving. If a medical exemption form has no specific vaccines listed, it is valid for all vaccines and remains in effect until the expiration date noted on the form. If no expiration date is included, the medical exemption remains in effect for the student's entire enrollment period in an Iowa licensed child care center, elementary and secondary school. If a medical exemption does not include diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine, a new Certificate of Immunization Exemption form is required to include those antigens.

A previously completed certificate for religious exemption is valid for all vaccines including Tdap. The religious exemption remains in effect for the student's entire enrollment period in an Iowa licensed child care center, elementary and secondary school.

## Meningococcal Vaccine Requirement

**Q58: What grades are included in the meningococcal vaccine requirement?**

**A: The meningococcal vaccine requirement has two parts.**

1. Students entering grades 7 through 11 will be required to have proof of at least one dose of the MenACWY vaccine received on or after 10 years of age.
2. Students entering 12th grade will need proof of two doses of MenACWY vaccine (1 dose received on or after 10 years of age and 1 dose received on or after 16 years of age); or 1 dose if received when the student was 16 years of age or older.

**Q59: Does the meningococcal requirement include meningitis B (MenB) vaccine?**

**A:** No. The meningococcal vaccine requirement is only for meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY). Meningococcal serogroup B vaccines (MenB) do not provide protection against serogroup A, C, W, or Y disease. MenB vaccine does not meet the school meningococcal vaccine requirement.

**Q60: Which vaccines meet the meningococcal vaccine requirement?**

**A:** The Iowa school entry requirement for immunizations follow ACIP recommendations. The ACIP recommends meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccination for adolescents at age 11-12 years. The youngest age a dose of meningococcal vaccine may be given to satisfy Iowa school entry requirements is 10 years of age. The CDC recommends the booster dose of meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccine to be administered on or after 16 years of age. The brand names of meningococcal conjugate vaccines available in the U.S. that contain all four serogroups are Menactra, MenQuadfi, Menveo, Penbraya (MenABCWY) and Penmenvy (MenABCWY).

On October 25, 2023, and April 16, 2025, ACIP recommended Penbraya and Penmenvay (MenABCWY) vaccines may be used when both MenACWY and MenB are indicated at the same visit. Penbraya and Penmenvay doses do count toward the school entry requirement.

Any meningococcal vaccine administered that contained less than the four required serogroups (A, C, W, Y) does not count toward the school entry requirement.

Meningococcal B vaccines are recommended by the CDC for people 16-23 years of age with a preferred age of vaccination of 16-18 years as a shared clinical decision-making recommendation. Shared clinical decision-making recommendations are individually based and informed by a decision process between the healthcare provider and the patient or parent/guardian. Meningococcal B vaccine doses do not count toward the school entry requirement. Brand names of meningococcal B vaccines licensed in the U.S. are Bexsero and Trumenba.

**Q61: Should all adolescents receive a routine booster dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)?**

**A:** Adolescents who receive the first dose of meningococcal between 10 and 16 years of age should receive a one-time booster dose, on or after 16 years of age. Adolescents who receive their first dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine on or after age 16 years of age do not need a booster dose of vaccine.

**Q62: What if a student entering grades 7 and above does not have proof of the meningitis vaccine before school starts?**

**A:** A Certificate of Immunization that includes the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) must be submitted to the school where the student is enrolled or attempting to enroll in grade 7 and above. If the student has not received a dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) the student shall be excluded from the benefits, activities, and opportunities of the school until a valid Certificate of Immunization is submitted.

Students enrolling in 12th who have only received one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY), prior to 16 years of age, may attend school by submitting a Provisional Certificate of Immunization. The Provisional Certificate of Immunization is valid for a maximum of 60 days which allows time for the student to receive the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY). If the student does not receive the vaccine by the end of the provisional enrollment period (60 days), the student shall be excluded from school.

**Q63: Can students who have not received a meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY), be placed on a Provisional Certificate of Immunization?**

**A:** No, there is no grace period or extension for this requirement. All students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade and above and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will need to submit a



completed Certificate of Immunization with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY). A Provisional Certificate of Immunization can only be issued when the applicant has received at least one dose of the required vaccine or is a transfer student from another U.S. school.

**Q64: Is there a grace period or extension to receive the meningococcal vaccine after school starts?**

**A:** No, there is no grace period or extension for this requirement. All students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade and above will need to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY), or a Certificate of Immunization Exemption before enrolling in school.

All 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will need to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization with the meningococcal conjugate vaccination (MenACWY), a Certificate of Provisional Enrollment or a Certificate of Immunization Exemption before enrolling in school.

**Q65: If a student received meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (MPSV4) at age 5 years (e.g., for international travel) and a dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) at age 11 or 12 years, will they still need a booster dose of MenACWY vaccine at age 16 years?**

**A:** Yes. Any meningococcal vaccination given prior to the tenth birthday (either with MenACWY or MPSV4) does NOT meet the meningococcal vaccine requirement. To comply with the 12<sup>th</sup> grade requirement, students will need to receive the second dose of meningococcal vaccine on or after 16 years of age.

**Q66: When looking at patient records in IRIS, some records include Meningococcal NOS vaccine. Does Meningococcal NOS vaccine meet the meningococcal vaccine school requirement?**

**A:** Meningococcal, NOS is the default name for meningococcal A, C, W, Y vaccines in IRIS if no trade name is selected. If no trade name was entered into IRIS and only Meningococcal NOS is displayed, a healthcare provider can assume this was a dose of meningococcal A, C, W, Y vaccine and would meet the meningococcal vaccine school requirement.

**Q67: If a student already has a valid Medical or Religious Certificate of Immunization Exemption on file, is an updated certificate of exemption required for the meningococcal vaccine requirements?**

**A:** If a medical exemption form has no specific vaccines listed, it is valid for all vaccines and remains in effect until the expiration date noted on the form. If no expiration date is included, the medical exemption remains in effect for the student's entire enrollment period in an Iowa licensed child care center, elementary and secondary school. ***If a medical exemption does not include the meningococcal vaccine, a new Certificate of Immunization Exemption form is required to include the vaccine.*** The Medical Certificate of Immunization

Exemption includes a section for the healthcare provider to select which required vaccine(s) the child is exempt from receiving.

A previously completed certificate for religious exemption is valid for all vaccines including Meningococcal. The religious exemption remains in effect for the student's entire enrollment period in an Iowa licensed child care center, elementary and secondary school.