



Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG
State Health Commissioner

August 21, 2020

Dear Indiana School Nurses:

As the Indiana State Health Commissioner, I want to thank you for the important work that each of you are doing as Indiana schools resume classes. I recognize that this is a unprecedented time for education, and I am proud to see how we, as a state, continue to put education on the forefront to ensure that our students return to a safe, productive learning environment. I have received many questions regarding immunizations, and I would like to take this opportunity to address the most common ones.

School immunization requirements for students learning in a virtual environment

Many of our school corporations have started the school year using an e-learning or virtual platform, and while students and faculty may not be in the building, the immunization requirements remain the same. I encourage you to remain committed to the prevention of vaccine-preventable disease by adhering to Indiana Code 20-34-4-5. This code highlights the expectation that students must be fully immunized unless they provide a religious objection, medical exemption or if extreme circumstances prevent them from receiving a vaccine before school begins. Schools may offer a 20-day waiver, which serves as a grace period to allow students to get their required vaccines.

School immunization requirements for the 2021-22 school year

Indiana has been very proactive in protecting Hoosier children from vaccine preventable disease. After careful review of the current school immunization requirements, we are not making any changes to the requirements for the 2021-22 school year. Please see the 2021-22 School Immunization Requirements posted at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/17094.htm>.

Important recommended vaccines

I am continually asked about the difference between vaccines that are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and vaccines required for school entrance. All vaccines that are recommended by CDC are important, safe, effective and prevent illness, including, in some cases, cancer. While not every recommended vaccine is required for school entry, I encourage you to be a strong advocate for all vaccines. Please foster conversations with parents and healthcare providers about the positive health benefits of Seasonal Influenza (FLU) vaccine, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine and the Meningococcal Serogroup B (MenB) vaccine.

Thank you all for the important work you do to protect Indiana's greatest resource, our children.

Yours in health,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kristina M. Box MD FACOG'.

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG
State Health Commissioner

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers.