

Information about Vermont's Childcare and School Immunization Exemptions

Vermont's Immunization Rule, adopted pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 1123, requires that before entry, children/students must have all the required immunizations unless exempt for medical or religious reasons. Effective July 1, 2016 the exemption for philosophic reasons is no longer an option. There is no phase-in period or grandfathering of existing prior year philosophic exemptions.

Medical exemptions require the signature of a health care practitioner authorized to prescribe vaccines. To claim a religious exemption, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to print, sign and return the form to the school **annually**, upon school entry. Renewal is not assumed, and failure to provide documentation may result in exclusion.

Any exemption claimed may result in exclusion from child care or school during the course of a disease outbreak if it is determined that the child/student is at risk for getting that disease and transmitting it to other children/students. The exclusion time length will vary depending on the disease, and can range from several days to more than a month

Before signing the religious exemption form, a parent/guardian must attest to holding religious beliefs opposed to immunizations, and acknowledge review of evidence-based educational material provided by the Vermont Department of Health regarding immunizations, that include:

1. Information about the risks of adverse reactions to immunization;
2. Information that failure to complete the required vaccination schedule increases risk to both the child and to others of contracting, carrying or spreading a vaccine-preventable infectious disease; and
3. Information that there are persons with special health needs attending schools and child care facilities unable to be vaccinated, or who are at heightened risk of contracting a vaccine-preventable communicable disease, and for whom such a disease could be life-threatening.

The evidence-based information, religious and medical exemption forms are located on the Department of Health website: <http://healthvermont.gov/immunizations-infectious-disease/immunization/k-12-school-nurses-and-administrators>

Children/students in the process of receiving all required vaccines may be provisionally admitted without an exemption if the child/student has a scheduled appointment to receive the missing vaccine(s), consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) catch-up immunization schedule.

The Provisional Admittance form must be signed by a health care provider and submitted by the parent/guardian to the child care/ school upon entry. The period of provisional admittance is in accordance with the CDC's catch-up immunization schedule, but may not exceed six months. Long term provisional admittance is not allowed.

More information about CDC's catch up immunization schedule is on the Department of Health website: <http://healthvermont.gov/immunizations-infectious-disease/immunization/k-12-school-nurses-and-administrators>