



August 22, 2016

Dear School Superintendent and Principal:

The start of the new school year is upon us. We appreciate that this is a busy time for everyone, but we wanted to remind you that now is also the time to make sure we have safe and healthy schools throughout the state of North Dakota by ensuring all children are meeting school immunization requirements.

North Dakota state law requires students who are attending school to be up to date on immunizations. This law was put in place to keep our kids safe. If students are not protected by vaccines, they are left vulnerable to diseases such as measles, chickenpox, mumps, or pertussis. Additionally, some students are unable to be vaccinated due to medical reasons, so it is important for other students around them to be vaccinated to prevent these diseases from entering the school. These diseases have the ability to quickly spread through a school environment. When outbreaks occur, not only is health at stake, but students who become ill will have to spend time out of school.

North Dakota Century Code, 23-07-17, mandates all students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade meet a minimum number of required immunizations prior to school entrance, and each school is legally responsible for excluding non-compliant students within 30 calendar days from the start of school. Both the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health know the importance of school attendance to students, and do not want to see students missing school; however, we feel the health of the entire school population needs to be considered. Compliance with North Dakota State law is not optional.

We ask that you ensure all of your students are up to date on required immunizations at the start of the school year. Parents of students who are not up to date or do not have an immunization record on file should be notified. Parents have 30 calendar days to comply with the required immunizations or the child must be excluded from school. A toolkit with school immunization requirements, template letters for parents, frequently asked questions, and other resources can be found at the following link: [School Immunization Toolkit](#).

Please contact the North Dakota Department of Health Immunization Program at 701.328.3386 or toll-free at 800.472.2180 with any questions or concerns regarding the school immunization survey.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Baesler  
State Superintendent



Terry L. Dwelle, MD  
State Health Officer