

Connecticut School Immunization Requirements

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Issue

Provide an overview of Connecticut's school immunization requirements. This report updates OLR Report [2019-R-0245](#).

School Immunization Requirements

For school children, Connecticut law requires immunization against the following diseases (the specific immunization schedule varies by disease):

1. measles, mumps, and rubella;
2. polio;
3. diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis;
4. haemophilus influenza B (required only if under age 5);
5. hepatitis B;
6. hepatitis A;
7. varicella (chicken pox);
8. influenza (required only for preschool);
9. pneumonia (required only if under age 5); and
10. meningitis (required beginning in 7th grade) ([CGS § 10-204a](#) and [Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 10-204a-1 et seq.](#)).

The same requirements for school children apply to staff and participants at child care settings, including day care centers, family and group day care homes, and youth camps. Municipal day

camps are not licensed by the state and are therefore exempt from immunization requirements ([Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 19-a-79-6a, 19a-87b-10\(k\)](#) and [19a-428-3](#)).

DPH's [website](#) includes the full immunization schedule for children in child care settings (see also [CGS §§ 19a-79\(a\)](#) and [-87b\(f\)](#), [Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 19a-79-6a\(e\)](#), and [19a-87b-10\(k\)](#)).

Connecticut law also generally requires full-time students attending in-state post-secondary institutions to provide proof of adequate immunization against measles, mumps, and rubella and chicken pox ([CGS § 10a-155](#)). The law also requires each student who lives in on-campus housing to be vaccinated against meningitis ([CGS § 10a-155b](#)).

Exemptions

Medical Exemptions

Connecticut law provides a medical exemption from the above immunization requirements to a child who presents a (1) DPH medical exemption [form](#) and (2) signed certificate from a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse stating that the immunization is medically contraindicated. The certificate must include the child's name and birth date as well as the vaccine for which the exemption is being filed and the medical condition that contraindicates the vaccine ([CGS § 10-204a](#) & [Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 10-204a et seq.](#)).

However, legislation enacted in 2021 requires DPH, by October 1, 2021, to create a new medical exemption certificate for these providers to use that includes additional information, such as:

1. a list of contraindications and precautions recognized by the CDC for each statutorily-required immunization from which the provider may select on behalf of an individual;
2. a section where the provider may include a written explanation for the medical exemption; and
3. a section where the provider may record a contraindication or precaution not recognized by the CDC, but that in the provider's discretion, results in the vaccination being medically contraindicated, including (a) an autoimmune disorder or family history of one, (b) family history of a reaction to a vaccine, (c) genetic predisposition to a vaccine reaction determined by genetic testing, and (d) a previous documented reaction correlated to a vaccine ([PA 21-6, § 7](#)).

Additionally, the new law establishes an 11-member Advisory Committee on Medically Contraindicated Vaccinations within DPH to advise the commissioner on issues concerning medical exemptions from state or federal immunization requirements. The committee is not responsible for confirming or denying any provider determination that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for an

individual. The committee must meet at least biannually and report on its activities and findings to the Public Health Committee annually, starting by January 1, 2022 ([PA 21-6, § 8](#)).

Religious Exemptions

Until recently, the state also allowed nonmedical exemptions for religious reasons. Specifically, prior law allowed parents or guardians to opt out of vaccinating their children if they presented a statement that immunization would be contrary to the religious beliefs of the child, parents, or guardian. The exemption statement had to be (1) officially acknowledged by one of certain individuals (such as a notary public, town clerk, or school nurse) and (2) submitted prior to the student's initial enrollment and seventh grade enrollment.

However, legislation enacted in 2021 eliminated this religious exemption and grandfathered in students enrolled in grades kindergarten or higher who submitted a religious exemption prior to April 28, 2021. The exemption continues to apply if they transfer to another public or private primary or secondary school in the state([PA 21-6, § 12](#)).

Under the act, children with prior religious exemptions who are enrolled in pre-kindergarten or other preschool programs generally must comply with immunization requirements by September 1, 2022, or within 14 days after transferring to a different public or private program, whichever is later. But these children may extend the timeframe if they present a written declaration from the child's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse that an alternative immunization schedule is recommended ([PA 21-6, § 1](#)).

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