

December 17, 2021

Dear School Administrators, Educators and Families of Students Grade 6 through 10;

As we near the end of 2021, we wanted to provide an update on Alberta Health Services (AHS) Public Health School Routine Immunization program. (Routine immunization does NOT include COVID-19.)

The Routine Immunization program typically runs throughout the school year, from fall until early spring. For the 2021/2022 school year, the immunization program has been augmented to support pandemic efforts and offer additional opportunities for families to book appointments at community health centres, large clinic venues or to participate in school immunization within the school setting.

As of December 15:

- Most students in Grade 6 have not yet received in-school immunizations due to the current [Alberta Health recommendation \(but not a requirement\)](#) to wait 14 days after a COVID 19 vaccine for five to 11 year old children before receiving another vaccine.
- Public Health South Zone school nursing teams have attempted to contact guardians to discuss current recommendations, but have not been successful in reaching everyone. If you have not been contacted, we encourage you to connect with a [Public Health nurse](#) to discuss the current recommendations and determine the best option for your child.
- During the week of December 6, AHS South Zone Public Health sent phone and text message reminders for Grade 6 through 10 students that are eligible for school immunizations (non-COVID). Any student eligible for school immunizations can receive an immunization at a school, community health centre or mass clinic.
- Public Health school nurses aim to immunize Grade 6 students, who have submitted a signed paper consent or verbal telephone consent, in January 2022. The school nurse will notify the school of the immunization event date for Grade 6 students once arranged.

Please read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for more information:

Why did we receive a text or phone message requesting we book an appointment for immunizations?

- A large number of Grade 6 through 10 students need immunizations this year. AHS Public Health is offering a number of ways to access immunization, in addition to the school setting.
- We *may* not have received a signed paper consent or verbal telephone consent yet for in-school routine, non-COVID immunizations.
- Students in Grades 6 through 10 can access school vaccines due now, without delay, by booking an appointment – please call our **South Zone AHS call centre at 1-888-635-0318**.

I provided consent verbally to a Public Health Nurse, or signed a paper consent form for in-school immunizations, do I have to book an appointment also now?

- If your child has recently received a school routine vaccine you do not need to book an appointment, please disregard the phone or text message.
- If you have not returned a consent form and you would like to be present with your child during the immunization you may choose to book an appointment now.
- If your child has not yet been immunized in school due to your child being absent or too anxious on the day of in-school immunization event, or perhaps the in-school event has not happened yet, then you *may* choose to book an appointment.
- School nurses will continue immunizing students this school year for vaccines due in Grade 6 through 10 only if you have provided consent (signed or verbal) this school year.

- The nurse will return to the school at another time if your child was absent on the date of the mass in-school immunization, however, if you would like to book an appointment now, you may.
- If you have provided consent (signed or verbal) this school year for routine school, non-COVID, immunizations and you choose to receive immunizations at our mass clinic venues, please talk to the nurse at the clinic appointment about any follow up doses due. You can choose where to receive those doses in the future and this will be charted in your child's electronic immunization record so that the school nurse is notified of these plans also.

What are the timelines for in-school immunizations this school year?

- Grade 7 and 8 in-school immunization has begun in most schools, however **Grade 6, 9 and 10 students** will generally be immunized in January, February and March 2022.
- Consent forms for Grade 9 and 10 students are being processed and may have not sent home to every school. However, they will be sent home in January 2022.

How will I know if in-school immunizations have happened or are planned for 2022?

- Your school health nurse will inform the school principal of the date of immunizations to distribute to families, or you may receive an AHS South Zone phone or text message reminder.
- Once in-school routine immunizations have happened, your child will be sent home with a Care After Immunization paper marked with the date and type of the immunization(s) that you have consented to this school year.

Why have I not received a consent form home for my child yet?

- Perhaps we do not have an immunization history for your child - we will be contacting you to discuss this before sending home any immunization consent forms
- Perhaps your child has recently moved to another school since the initial consent forms were sent home. Once our electronic immunization record system is updated with these changes, we will send a consent form home.
- Perhaps your child is up to date for their current age immunization schedule. Review the immunization schedule for children at www.immunizealberta.ca or contact a public health nurse at your nearest public health office.

What if my child received a first dose of immunizations at the summer school catch up immunization clinics in July, August or September, and is due for follow up six months from that date?

- More information will be available in future communications on how to book your child for a second dose of their routine immunizations.

If you are unsure when your child is due for follow up doses please call your local public health office to talk with a Registered Nurse.

Salutation,



Dr. Allison Gonsalves, MD, FRCPC
 Medical Officer of Health
 Alberta Health Services, South Zone