



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: May 29, 2020
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Health Requirements For Enrollment Reentry**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) encourages school divisions to communicate the importance of getting immunizations and physicals required for school enrollment to parents or guardians of school-age children. Although the COVID-19 pandemic initially disrupted or limited services offered by local health departments and providers, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that parents proceed with well-child physicals and immunizations through their local health care providers. Planning ahead to complete these state requirements for school enrollment will ensure a smooth and safe start when schools reopen.

The *Code of Virginia* requires that children receive a comprehensive physical examination ([§ 22.1-270](#)) within 12 months prior to the start of school and be adequately immunized ([§ 22.1-271.2](#)) before entering public kindergarten or elementary school. Other required immunizations include Human Papillomavirus (HPV) for girls entering sixth grade; and a Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (Tdap) booster for entry into seventh grade.

Additional resources are available for families of uninsured and underinsured children or those impacted financially by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The VDH, [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\) map](#) indicates participating providers for immunizations by region. Parents may contact local clinics directly for information and hours of service.
- The [Virginia Community Healthcare Association](#) works with a statewide network of clinics that bill for public and some private insurance. Many clinics provide a sliding scale for those without insurance and offer free immunizations in partnership with the VDH.
- The [Virginia Association of Free Clinics](#) are independent, nonprofit, volunteer-driven and community-based organizations. Each clinic sets its own eligibility requirements and guidelines, and all must be contacted directly for assistance.

School divisions are reminded that children of military families, without documentation of immunizations, should be immediately enrolled and shall have up to 30 days from the date of enrollment to obtain any immunizations required by the receiving state. The Interstate Compact on the Educational Opportunity of Military Children ([§ 22.1-360](#)) does not waive the physical examination requirement for these children. If the pupil's health record indicates that a physical was conducted prior to admission to another school or school division then the receiving school is permitted to use such a report when enrolling the student ([§ 22.1-270](#)). School divisions should consider the current challenges that military families may face in scheduling physical examinations as a result of COVID-19 and find ways to support families in securing the required physicals.

Regular requirements for physicals and immunizations do not impact the immediate enrollment mandate in the *McKinney-Vento Act* for students experiencing homelessness. Students who are eligible for McKinney-Vento rights and services should be immediately enrolled unless additional requirements, specifically implemented to address the pandemic, are being placed on all students. In such cases, the additional requirements would apply as comparable requirements. The student/family should be referred to the [Local Homeless Education Liaison](#) who can ensure the family receives assistance with any barriers caused by the requirements, including connecting the family with additional community services.

If you have additional questions, please contact Tracy White, School Health Specialist at VDOE, by email at Tracy.White@doe.virginia.gov, or by telephone at (804) 786-8671 or Joanna Pitts, School Health Specialist at VDH, by email at Joanna.Pitts@vdh.virginia.gov.

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