DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION POLICY

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TO SUPPORT IMMUNIZATION COMPLIANCE

OWN THE MESSAGE

- Start with the "why." Vaccines are essential to keep our children and communities safe. Getting vaccinated is a concrete way that families can take control of their child's health!
- Directly communicate the expectations of immunization compliance to the school community. Ensure parents, guardians, students and school staff members (including front office staff) understand the pediatric immunization certification requirements.
- Prioritize immunization certification in written and in-person meetings and communications with the school community, especially in the spring (in anticipation of next school year) and at the start of the school year. This may include information in the school's enrollment packages, website, bulletin boards, back-to-school nights, letters or emails from the principal, parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings, parent-teacher conferences and robocalls.

SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM: CREATE A PARTNERSHIP - MAKE IT A TEAM EFFORT

- Establish the School Health Team and ensure it meets prior to the start-of-school to review and plan protocols for the year ahead. Clearly define how you as the school leader will reinforce the efforts of the School Health Team and set expectations for close collaboration among team members.
- Create an annual calendar of check-ins for your School Health Team, with more time to meet during the start-of-school season.
- Ensure the school nurse (or health suite personnel) and the registrar's office are fully engaged in the efforts of the School Health Team. Paper documents may sometimes get lost between the two offices, so ensure a process is in place for transferring health records. Remind school staff to check backpacks and lockers for enrollment documents during the start-of-school. The School Health Team must be confident the immunization certification does not exist before notifying a parent, guardian, or adult student of non-compliance.
- Establish communication protocols for the School Health Team. Communications should be aligned between the Immunization Points of Contact (IPOCs) and registrar's office so that families receive a coherent message on their immunization certification responsibilities.
- As a member of the School Health Team, review and approve of all communications and actions made that will impact a student's attendance or admittance to school.

ENROLLMENT PACKET INFORMATION

- Include a requirement for all students to complete health forms at the time of enrollment.
- Include the Universal Health Certificate, Oral Health Assessment, and immunization one-pager for families in enrollment packages and on back-to-school checklists.
- Ensure the registrar's office is requesting immunization certification at the time of enrollment.
- Use robocalls to remind families about requirements for start-of-school, including immunizations.

BE PERSONAL AND PRACTICAL IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH FAMILIES

- Sign or co-sign all notifications and letters sent to parents, guardians, or adult students regarding immunization certification compliance. Your signature will help families pay attention!
- Call families directly on the phone. The personal touch helps families understand the importance.
- Combine your message about immunization certification with information on how families can access primary care. Direct families to their primary care physician or a location identified by DC Health).

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MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR