



June 16, 2016

Dear Superintendent,

Re: Mature Minor Consent for School-Based Grade 9 Immunizations

I am writing to advise you about the provincial roll out of the *Mature Minor Consent* standard of practice for public health nurses in school-based immunization programs. Although this has already been implemented in many schools, going forward, all public health nurses in BC will consistently offer *mature minor consent* as an option for Grade 9 students receiving immunization in schools and other health care settings.

Mature minor consent stipulates that a youth who demonstrates an understanding of the benefits and risks of a health service can consent or refuse that service independent of a parent or representative. This would be applied to immunizations provided in Grade 9 by public health nurses as part of the BC childhood immunization schedule. The provision of mature minor consent has been included in BC legislation under the Infants' Act, and the BC Court of Appeal has outlined the duty of healthcare professionals to involve minors in healthcare decision-making when the minor has the capacity to do so.

This policy aims to standardize practice across the Province, which has hitherto been variable. The consistent implementation of mature minor consent practices in public schools ensures services are delivered within the legislation and best practices guidelines. However, the preferred model for school immunization is that of a **collaborative model of consent**, involving the student's parent(s) or representative.

The process would be as follows for Grade 9 and older students:

1. Written information regarding vaccines being given will be provided to the student at the school along with a consent form.
2. Information sent home would clearly outline the rights of the minor to consent under the Infant Act.
3. Parent(s) and the student will be encouraged to discuss the immunization together.
4. Either the parent or student will sign the consent, affirming or declining the vaccine(s) and return it to the school.
5. Any student who did not present a signed consent, or who presents a consent form signed by the parents in advance of the immunization clinic, would be offered the opportunity to consent on their own behalf at the time of the clinic. Students will also continue to exercise their right to not receive vaccine(s) at the immunization clinic.

The benefits of this policy include capitalization on successes of the current program, minimization of the risk of missed immunization opportunities and support to nurses, parents or representatives and school personnel to follow legislation in a process that is more inclusive of the student. If you or any of your principals or school boards has further questions or concerns,

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I would be pleased to discuss them.

Attached is the link to the BC Health File "The Infants Act, Mature Minor consent and Immunization" for your reference: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/pdf/hfile119.pdf>.

On a separate note, as grade 9 is the last year vaccines are offered in the school setting, I would like to ask families to review their child's vaccine records to ensure all of the provincially recommended vaccines have been received up to this age. Attached is a letter we are requesting schools send out via their email distribution lists. As not all parents subscribe to the school email lists, we are also asking that the letter be inserted into the end of the year grade 9 report card packages, as well as posting on the school web site.

Finally, we have summarized school-based immunization coverage rates by municipality on our website. These include HPV, Meningococcal, Varicella, Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus. Please visit: <http://www.fraserhealth.ca/media/2016%2005%2027%20Community%20Profiles.pdf> to obtain this information.

Sincerely,



Dr. Shovita Padhi, MD, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
Office of the Medical Health Officer



Dear parent/guardian/student,

Grade 9 is the last year vaccines are offered in the school setting. Public Health encourages families to review their child's vaccine records to ensure all of the provincially recommended vaccines have been received up to this age. Below is the list of recommended publicly funded 'school age' vaccines your child should have received by the end of Grade 9:

Vaccine	Complete series includes
Hepatitis B <u>HealthLinkBC File25a</u>	2 doses (if 3 doses not received in infancy)
Meningococcal C vaccine <u>HealthLinkBC File23a</u>	1 dose (after 10 years of age)
Varicella † (chickenpox) <u>HealthLinkBC File44b</u>	2 doses †
HPV (girls only) (human papillomavirus) <u>HealthLinkBC File101b</u>	2 doses
MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) <u>HealthLinkBC File14a</u>	2 doses
Tdap †† (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) <u>HealthLinkBC File18c</u>	1 dose ††

† Children who had chickenpox or shingles disease at 1 year of age or older do not need the chickenpox vaccine.

†† Children should already have received a primary series of Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Polio prior to school entry

Because of changes to the immunization schedule and recommended number of doses for varicella, your child may not have received a second dose of varicella vaccine. If your child is missing any of the recommended immunizations, please contact your Doctor, pharmacy, or local Health Unit to make an appointment. These immunizations are provided **free of charge**.

After Grade 9, recommended routine adult immunizations include Td (tetanus, diphtheria) every 10 years and influenza immunization annually. For more information on immunizations, please visit: <http://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-info/health-topics/immunizations/> or <http://www.immunizebc.ca/>

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Hope HU Tel: 604-860-7630	Langley HU Tel: 604-539-2900	Maple Ridge HU Tel: 604-476-7000	Mission HU Tel: 604-814-5500	New Westminster HU Tel: 604-777-6740	Tricities HU, Port Moody Tel: 604-949-7200
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