



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

July 10, 2019

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization

42-09 28th Street, CN21
Queens, NY 11101-4132

Dear Colleague:

On June 13, 2019, legislation removing non-medical exemptions from school and child care immunization requirements was signed into New York State law, effective immediately. All previously approved religious exemptions are now void. Children are now required to be vaccinated to attend either: 1) public, private, or parochial schools; or 2) child care settings.

Children who had a religious exemption and who attend a year-round school or child care program must now have received the first age-appropriate dose in each immunization series by June 28, 2019, to attend or remain in school or child care. Additionally, by July 14, 2019, parents and guardians must show that they have scheduled appointments for all required follow-up doses. Children not in year-round programs will need to be vaccinated no later than 14 days after the first day of school or child care.

Please be aware that when California passed similar legislation there was an increase in medical exemption requests. Providers should submit only valid medical exemption requests. All medical exemptions are reviewed by physicians at the Health Department's Office of School Health for students attending public school. The Health Department will also be reviewing medical exemptions as part of the audits conducted at non-public schools and child care facilities and when requested by the school or facility. We will be following this situation closely and tracking the number and patterns of medical exemptions.

All medical exemptions requests should use the form available on the Department of Education website at www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/immunizations. Only physicians licensed in New York State can request a medical exemption. The request must specify which vaccine(s), why the vaccine would be detrimental to the child's health and the duration of the exemption. All medical exemptions are required to be reviewed annually. As guidance, a table summarizing valid contraindications and precautions to vaccines is available at <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3072a.pdf>

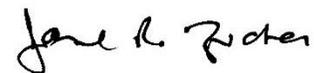
Please note that even if an unvaccinated child has serology demonstrating they are immune to measles due to infection acquired during the ongoing measles outbreak in New York City, they still need documentation of immunity to mumps and rubella. They will therefore still need Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine, in addition to all other required immunizations.

As a reminder, the required school immunizations can be found at www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/immunizations. Children who are delayed in their immunizations must be vaccinated in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices catch-up schedule; see <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/catchup.html>. Delays in vaccination or vaccine doses and/or alternative immunization schedules are not allowed. Child care facilities and schools are required to exclude children who are not vaccinated on time and not in compliance with required immunizations.

Finally, we want you to be aware that the Health Department has received anecdotal reports of parents altering serology reports or submitting falsified vaccination records. We ask providers to be mindful of this and diligent in reviewing the validity of historic immunization records from parents, especially before these vaccines are submitted to the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) as historical immunizations. The Health Department will investigate such reports when received and take appropriate action, if indicated.

For questions on the removal of the religious exemption, school and daycare immunization requirements, or any other vaccine-preventable disease issue, please call (347) 396-2400 or email nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov. We thank you for your continuing efforts at protecting NYC residents from vaccine-preventable illnesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane R. Zucker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc