



**GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

**VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM**

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July 14, 2022

To: All Immunization Providers

Re: **VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL ENTRY
(2022-2023 School Year)**

In preparation for the upcoming school year, the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health Immunization Program is forwarding to all Immunization Providers, the 2022-2023 Vaccine Requirements for School Entry.

The following vaccines are recommended by the Department of Health as well as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP):

- **Hepatitis B, Rotavirus, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Haemophilus Influenzae type b, Pneumococcal (Prevnar) Inactivated Poliovirus, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, Hepatitis A, and Influenza.**

Please note: The Influenza vaccine is being recommended for all children in childcare facilities. All children 6 months old and above are encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine (unless a child is exempt—see guidelines below.)

Through ongoing assessment of our coverage rates, it has been determined that less than 10% of the Virgin Islands' children are vaccinated against influenza. Conditions in childcare facilities also promote the spread of influenza: there are a large number of people together who are in close contact, and there is poor respiratory hygiene (e.g., covering a cough). Even more, the highest rates of infection are in children less than 5 years old.

CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine. Vaccination is especially important for certain people who are at high-risk or who are in close contact with a high-risk person, including the following groups:

- Children younger than 5 years of age, and children of any age with a long-term health condition like asthma, diabetes, or disorders of the brain or nervous system. These children are at a higher



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risk of serious flu complications (like pneumonia) if they get the flu. For the complete list of those at high risk, visit [People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications](#).

- Adults who meet any of the following criteria listed below should get a seasonal flu vaccine:
 - Are in close contact with children younger than 5 years of age (people who live with them).
 - Are out-of-home caregivers (nannies, daycare providers, etc.) of children younger than 5 years of age.
 - Live with or have another close contact with a child or children of any age with a chronic health problem (asthma, diabetes, etc.).

The following immunizations are “required” for school entry in the United States Virgin Islands for the school year 2022-2023.

Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps Rubella, Varicella, and Meningococcal.

- **One (1) dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap) is required for children 11 years of age and above (eligibility for vaccination will be determined by a health care provider).**
- **Two (2) doses of Varicella vaccine are required for children in kindergarten through the 11th grade—both new and existing students who are entering/registering/repeating/ (eligibility to be determined by a healthcare provider).**
- **Please note that effective this 2022-2023 school year, two (2) doses of Varicella will be required for children in kindergarten through 11th grade.**

For more information concerning the number of doses recommended based upon the child’s age and immunization history, please refer to the attached “Recommended Immunization Schedule for Children and Adolescents aged 18 years and younger.”

Before being issued an immunization clearance form for school registration or being admitted to school, all children shall receive the required vaccine(s) (and a total number of doses), at the **minimum age recommended in the attached immunization schedule**; however, for each child, eligibility to receive the required vaccine will be determined by the clinic nurse or healthcare provider.



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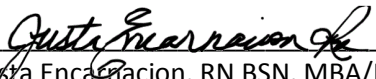
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- Any child who received the immunization clearance form at the time of the clinic visit but has **not** completed the required vaccine series (due to the time intervals required between doses), **must** return to the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinic or their healthcare provider to complete the required vaccine series by the vaccination date(s) indicated and documented by the immunization provider in the child's immunization record.

Please call the Department of Health, Maternal Child, and Health program at (340) 777-8804 for St. Thomas/St. John or (340) 514-6839 on St. Croix if you have any questions concerning the vaccines recommended for infants and children specified above.

Please note: Exemptions may be granted for school-aged children based on the principles and teachings of a recognized religious organization/church, notarized personal statement, and if the vaccines/medical agents are medically contraindicated.

Sincerely,

 / 7/28/2022
Justa Encarnacion, RN BSN, MBA/HCM Date
Commissioner of Health