

Queensland School Immunisation Program

Disclosure of student and parent information

Frequently asked questions for parents/legal guardians

What is the School Immunisation Program?

Queensland Health's School Immunisation Program, offers Year 7 students in state and non-state schools free nationally recommended immunisations to protect against human papillomavirus and diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough). Similar programs are offered in other States and Territories across Australia.

How does it operate?

The School Immunisation Program commenced as a statewide program in Queensland in 2007 and is the most efficient and effective way to immunise adolescents. Queensland Health authorises school immunisation providers to visit schools and immunise students. To be immunised students must return a consent card signed by their parent/legal guardian. If a consent card is not returned, the student is not vaccinated.

What are the legislative changes relating to student and parent/legal guardian information?

The change to legislation requires the school Principal to provide student and parent/legal guardian information to approved school immunisation providers for the purposes of following up parents/ legal guardians of students who have not returned a consent card. This includes:

- the name and date of birth of a student
- the name, telephone number, email address and postal address of a parent or guardian of a student, and
- any other information prescribed by regulation about a student. This may include the sex of the student and which class or group they are attached to.

How will the changes be beneficial for the school immunisation program?

The changes were needed because a large number of immunisation consent cards were not being returned to school. This meant parents/legal guardians may not have been receiving information about the program and been given the opportunity for their child to be immunised.

The changes mean that the school immunisation providers will be able to determine those who have and have not consented, and directly follow-up with parents of students who have not returned a consent card. This direct follow-up ensures all parents are offered the opportunity for their child to participate in this important school health program and protect their child against human papillomavirus and diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough). It may also assist parents in making decisions about their child's immunisation needs.

If my child returns a consent card to school, will I be contacted?

No. If your child returns a consent card to school, you will not be contacted. However, if you consented to vaccination you may be contacted if the information you provided on the consent card is not clear or incomplete.

As a parent/legal guardian can I decline consent for my child to participate in the school immunisation program?

Yes. You will need to complete the consent card to record your refusal in the 'No to vaccination' section and return the consent card to your child's school. This will ensure you are not contacted by the school immunisation provider.

Is the Principal required to pass on student and parent/legal guardian information to a school immunisation provider?

Yes, unless the Principal determines that it is not in the best interest of the student to pass on the information. An example of this may be a child under a protection order.

How will the information be protected?

All school immunisation providers are bound to comply with the Queensland *Information Privacy Act 2009*. This Act stipulates the requirements for the secure collection, use, storage and disposal of personal information to be followed by school health program providers.

How will information be transferred, used and stored?

Student and parent information will be given to the school immunisation provider in a secure format agreed to by the Principal and the school immunisation provider early in the school year. The information will be securely stored and only accessed by authorised staff. School immunisation providers must store and dispose of disclosed student information in accordance with the Queensland State Archive guidelines.

How long will the information be retained?

The information will only be retained by the school immunisation provider for the school year that your child is eligible for vaccination. The information will be deleted from any electronic system and hard copies of the information will not be retained.

Where can I get more information?

- Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- Visit Queensland Health's Immunisation website: www.health.qld.gov.au/immunisation