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COMMUNITY

Get immunized, or get suspended

KATHRYN BOYLE
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Halton Region is requesting all high school students in the region report their up-to-date immunization records or exemption to the health department by Feb. 8 or risk being suspended from school for up to 20 days, starting Feb. 9.

"In order to keep the community healthy and safe from the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases, the Halton Region health department is reviewing the immunization records of high school students in Halton to ensure they are up-to-date with important vaccines," Dr. Hamidah Meghani, Halton Region's medical officer of health, said. "While the majority of families in Halton have up-to-date immunizations, many are unaware that they need to update the health department after every immunization."

The Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA),

which became law in 1990, protects the health of children and communities by ensuring students are up-to-date with their immunizations to stop the spread of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunizations required for school aged children include:

- . Diphtheria;
- . Pertussis;
- . Tetanus;
- . Polio;
- . Measles;
- . Mumps;
- . Rubella;
- . Meningococcal disease;
- . Varicella

(chickenpox) — required for children born in 2010 or later.

Current high school students born between 2000 and 2003 with incomplete immunization records received advanced notices in September 2017. These notices included which vaccine(s) were missing from the student's record, how to arrange for immunization and how to submit records

to the health department. In November and December 2017, the health department offered 32 clinics providing meningococcal immunization in high schools to ensure easy access for those students born in 2000-2003 who required this vaccine to avoid suspension. Other vaccines are available through a family doctor.

Parents or guardians can submit a photo of their child's immunization record online at halton.ca/immunize or through the OneHalton app. Families can also call 311, drop off or mail a copy of their child's immunization record to the Halton Region health department at 1151 Bronte Rd. in Oakville, L6M 3L1, or any of the Halton Region health clinics in Acton, Burlington, Georgetown, Milton and Oakville. For more information about ISPA and how immunization keeps children safe and healthy, please visit halton.ca/immunize.

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