

Students need these vaccinations to attend school in Halton

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The end of summer holidays is drawing near, and much to the chagrin of students across the region, the time has come to start scratching items off the annual back-to-school checklist.

Halton Region is reminding parents of one very important item on that list which could affect enrolment come September - legally mandated vaccinations.

The reminder was posted on the region's Twitter page on Wednesday (Aug. 9).

Unless exempt, all primary and secondary students attending school in Halton are required by law to follow a vaccination schedule in order to attend classes.

The region's website outlines both required and suggested vaccinations and provides a schedule for parents and students to follow as they make their way through the grades.

"Although all immunizations listed in the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule are recommended, specific immunizations are legally required for all stu-

dents attending school in Halton Region as per the Immunization of School Pupil's Act (ISPA)," says the region on its website.

Parents must provide proof that their children have the following immunizations to legally attend schools: diphtheria, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, polio, meningococcal disease, and varicella (chickenpox) for those born in 2010 or later.

According to the vaccination schedule, children aged four to six must have been vaccinated with both the quadracel (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and poliomyelitis) and MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella and varicella) vaccines in order to attend school.

Students heading into Grade 7 must be vaccinated with Menactra, also called the meningococcal A, C, Y, W-135 vaccine.

"As of July 1, 2014, the meningococcal vaccine (Menactra) has been required for school attendance. Menactra is mandatory like diphtheria, tetanus and polio vaccines," according to the region.

Students aged 14-16 must also



Steve Somerville/Metroland

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be up date with the tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine booster, due 10 years after initial inoculation.

It also recommends - but does not require - students take part in the Hepatitis B Immunization Program for Grade 7s, while Gardasil (human papillomavirus or HPV vaccine) is recommended for female Grade 8 students. Annual

flu shots are also recommended but not required.

These are also available free of charge through regional community immunization clinics if students missed in-school vaccination programs.

Parents need to keep immunization records provided by their doctor. These are yellow slips indicating what vaccines each child

has received, and are required for starting day nursery or kindergarten, when transferring to a school in another area, going to camp or when enrolling in certain health-related college/university programs or working in a health-related field.

"It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to give this immunization information about their school-aged children to Halton Public Health. Your doctor's office does not update Halton Public Health about your child's immunizations," says the region.

Parents are able to exempt their children from mandatory vaccinations under certain circumstances.

"An exemption may be obtained if there are medical reasons why the child should not be vaccinated or if the family chooses not to vaccinate the child based on conscience or religious belief. A vaccine exemption allows an unimmunized child to attend day-care or school as long as there are no outbreaks in the facility," said the region.

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