

Immunisation made easy.

School Immunisation Program –
information for schools



What is the School Immunisation Program?

Schools play an invaluable role in looking after the health of their students. Immunisation against a number of diseases is one strategy which contributes to the wellbeing of both the individual and the community as a whole.

School immunisation programs are regarded as a highly efficient and cost-effective way to immunise an age group which can otherwise be difficult to reach.

Queensland Health acknowledges the important role schools play in helping service providers conduct a vaccination clinic.

Queensland Health's annual School Immunisation Program (SIP) provides secondary school students in state and non-state schools across Queensland the opportunity to be vaccinated against a range of diseases.

The following vaccines are offered for Year 7 students:

- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (whooping cough)

The following vaccine is offered for Year 10 students:

- Meningococcal A, C, W and Y

This booklet outlines all you need to know to facilitate a successful immunisation clinic, including what you need to do before, during and after the clinic.

Sample letters to parents/legal guardians/authorized person, school newsletter article, tips for coordinating clinics and sample messages for both parents/legal guardians/authorised person and students are included in the appendices. These resources will assist you to inform your school community about this important public health program that offers protection for individuals and our whole community from vaccine preventable diseases.

Queensland Health is working in partnership with a range of vaccine service providers to deliver the program. Your school's immunisation program is provided by:

Gold Coast Public Health Unit

P: 1800 940 750 E: admin.immunisegc@health.qld.gov.au

Leading up to the immunisation clinic

- You should have been contacted by the Gold Coast Public Health Unit to confirm your scheduled dates. If you are unsure of your scheduled clinic date, please contact us on 1800 940 750.
- Please nominate a staff member as the primary contact and provide the contact details for this person to the immunisation team, who will then liaise with this staff member about conducting the program including organizing dates, how much time is required to vaccinate the students (particularly large numbers), distribution of consent forms, and requirements and procedures for clinic sessions.
- When the dates for the immunisation clinic have been scheduled, please advise all relevant staff and schedule the dates into the school community calendar. If the date is changed, relevant staff and the school community calendar should be updated.
- Ongoing communication between your school's primary contact and the immunisation team is important to minimise disruption to the school and to streamline the immunisation clinics.

Disclosure of student and parent information

The Queensland Government has amended the Public Health Act 2005 to improve the uptake of the School Immunisation Program. The amendment requires school principals to disclose student and parent information to approved providers, including school immunisation providers, to allow them to:

- reconcile returned consent forms for school health programs (i.e. immunisation and dental) against eligible students
- follow-up with parents/legal guardians/authorised person/s of students who have not returned a consent form to offer them the opportunity to participate in the school health programs, and
- assist families to resolve concerns about their child's immunisation or oral health needs.

The legislative changes require a school principal, or their delegate, to disclose student and parent information including:

- the name and date of birth of a student
- the name, telephone number, email address, residential and postal address of a parent/ legal guardian/authorised person of a student, and
- other information prescribed by regulation about a student. For example, the sex of the student and which class or group they are attached to.

The Gold Coast Public Health Unit may use this information to:

- invite parents to complete a consent form online
- match returned consent forms with student lists to determine those who have consented, those who have indicated a 'No' to immunisation/s and those who haven't returned a consent form
- follow up with parents/legal guardians/authorised person of students who haven't returned a consent form to offer them the opportunity to have their child immunised, and
- analyse the information to inform future strategies to improve consent form return rates.

Parents who return a consent form indicating 'No' to immunisation will not be contacted. Children will not be vaccinated without a valid consent form.

Information Privacy

The legislative changes require a school principal, or their delegate, to disclose student and parent information.

To protect disclosed information, the law binds school immunisation providers to comply with either the National Privacy Principles or Information Privacy Principles under 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.

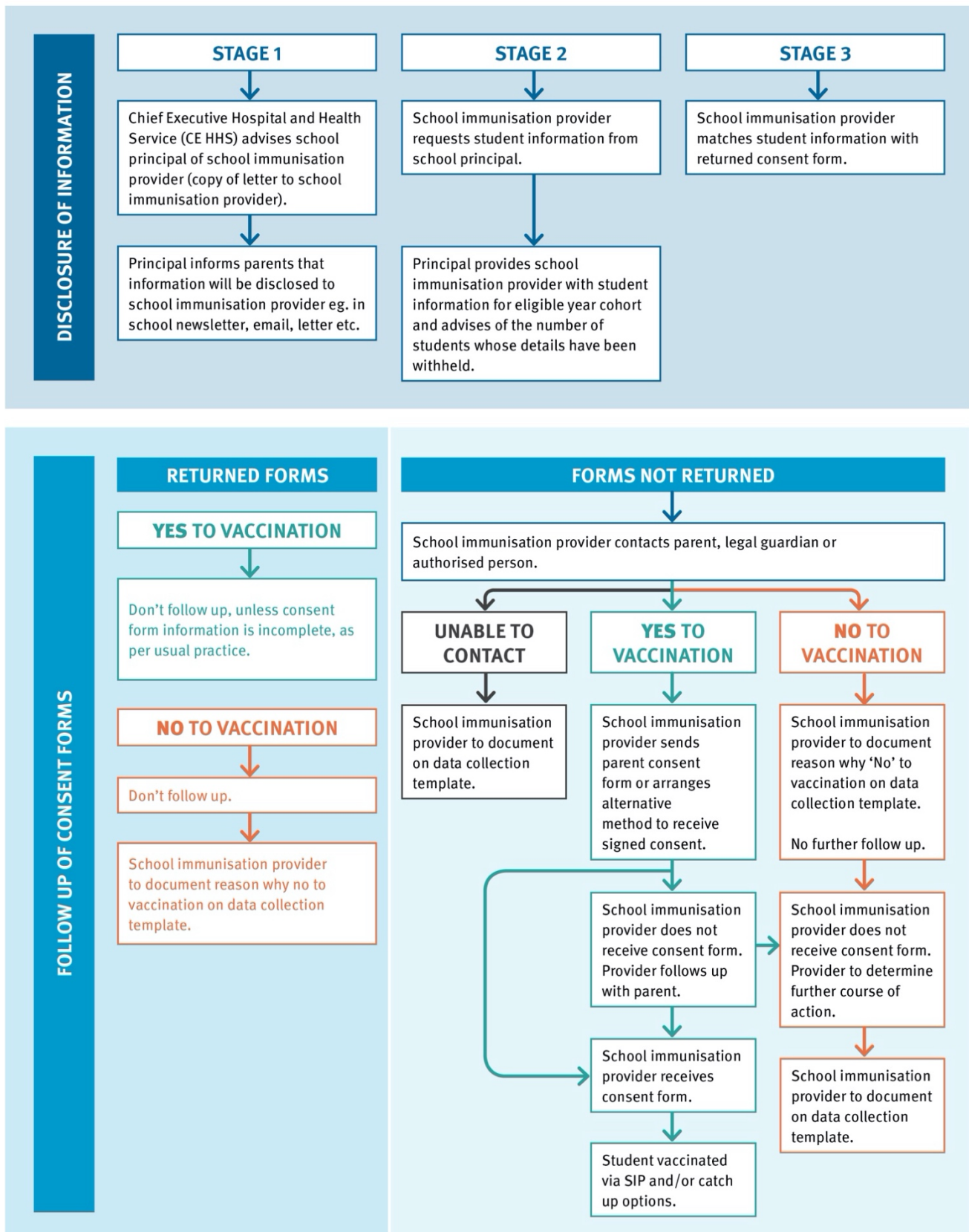
School immunisation providers must store and dispose of disclosed student information in accordance with the Queensland State Archive guidelines. The information is to be deleted by the school immunisation provider from any electronic system and hard copies of the information destroyed when no longer required.

Process

It is important for schools to update their privacy policy to reflect this law and take reasonable steps to ensure that parents are aware of these disclosure requirements.

The school principal is required to disclose the information to the Gold Coast Public Health Unit. This request should only occur once a year. The information should be disclosed within a reasonable period and in a format, that is usable by the Gold Coast Public Health Unit. There is no requirement to update the data set once the information has been provided to the unit, i.e. if a new student is enrolled at the school. The timeframe and format for the disclosed information is as follows (see over page).

Figure 1: Process for disclosure of student information and follow up of non-returned forms.



If requested by the public health unit, principals must disclose the information, unless the school principal deems disclosure is not in the best interest of the student. The principal's decision to not disclose a student's information is at the discretion of the school principal.

Examples why a principal may not disclose information are provided in Table 1. For reconciliation purposes, the principal must still advise the Gold Coast Public Health Unit of the number of students that have not been disclosed.

Table 1: Examples for not disclosing student and parental/legal guardian/authorised person information

Reason
Known domestic violence issues
Known custody issues
Family involved in a police matter

Unless it is not in the student's best interest, student and parent/legal guardian/authorised person information for all Year 7 and all Year 10 students must be disclosed to the school immunisation provider. The reason for this is that Queensland Health wants to give parents/legal guardians/authorised person/s every opportunity for their child to participate in the School Immunisation Program and be protected against vaccine preventable diseases.

A parent/legal guardian/authorised person may request that you do not disclose their information. In these instances, it is recommended that the principal work with the parent/legal guardian/authorised person to ensure they are fully informed about the purpose of the information disclosure. It is at the principal's discretion whether they disclose information in these instances. If you require further information please contact the Gold Coast Public Health Unit immunisation team on 1800 940 750.

Distribution of consent forms

Online

Gold Coast Health will use the class list provided by your school to email parents/legal guardians/authorised person of Year 7 and Year 10 students a link to complete an electronic consent form. The online consent form contains information on each of the vaccines that will be provided.

It is recommended your school send an email to parents/legal guardians/authorised person/s (Appendix 1) to inform them that they should be receiving an email from the Gold Coast Public Health Unit.

Paper

Schools will receive a small number of consent packs for Year 7 and Year 10 students whose parents/legal guardian/authorised person are unable to complete an online form. These forms should be held at the office for student/ parent/legal guardian/authorised person collection.

The Year 7 consent pack contains:

- one consent form for human papillomavirus (HPV) and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (whooping cough) immunisations
- an information booklet.

The Year 10 consent pack contains:

- one consent form for meningococcal ACWY immunisation
- an information booklet.

Each consent pack will be in a Gold Coast Health envelope which parents/legal guardian/authorised person can use to return the completed consent form.

Communication

Your school may wish to distribute information about the school immunisation program to the school community. For example, via a parent/legal guardian/authorised person email or text message, school newsletter article, or a note in the school diary or prospectus.

Sample letters to parents/legal guardians/authorised persons and a newsletter article are included in the appendices (Appendix 2, Appendix 3) of this document and may be adapted for your school's use.

School staff are not eligible to receive immunisations as part of this program.

Consent forms to be returned

Online

Electronic consent forms will be sent directly by the Gold Coast Public Health Unit and therefore do not require any handling by the school.

Paper consent forms to be returned

Paper consent forms should be collected and held at the school office. The Gold Coast Public Health team will collect these forms from the office on the morning of the clinic.

Parent/legal guardian/authorised person with any questions around the consent process are welcome to phone Gold Coast Public Health Unit immunisation team on 1800 940 750.

Prior to the immunisation clinic

- Include an article in your school newsletter /Facebook page outlining the immunisation clinic date and details, and instructions about the return of consent forms to the school (sample provided in Appendix 2, Appendix 3).
- If the clinic date changes, inform parents as soon as possible.
- Please inform the appropriate class teachers of the time, date and place of the immunisation clinic.
- The immunisation team will contact the school to confirm clinic arrangements and collect consent forms for checking prior to the vaccination session.

-
- Read the 'At the start of the clinic' section so you can arrange relevant equipment and know what to expect on the day.
 - Your school will be sent a list of students to be vaccinated on your scheduled clinic day prior to the immunisation clinic. If you have not already done so, please advise how you would like your student consents organised; you can bring the students down in male/female cohorts, or sorted by classes. This list will also contain names of students to "see first". These students should be brought down to the vaccination room first as they may be highly anxious or have a medical condition that requires more attention.

At the start of the clinic

On the day, the immunisation team will report to the front office/reception for sign-in prior to being directed to the allocated immunisation area.

During the sign-in process, late consents can be collected by the immunisation team.

To ensure everything runs smoothly, the immunisation team requests:

- Access to the room to set up prior to the clinic.
- Staff member/s bring students to the vaccinating area and to distribute all signed consent forms to students prior to vaccination. All consent forms that are not distributed to students are to be followed up by the school to determine if the child is absent, has left the school etc. All forms must be returned to the immunisation team on the day of the immunisation clinic for appropriate follow-up.
- Only students with 'Yes' signed consent forms should come to the clinic.
- A school staff member/s should be allocated to supervise the students in the recovery area on the day. Students should remain seated on the floor in the recovery area for 15 minutes after their immunisation. This staff member will be briefed by the immunisation team. The recovery area should be close to the clinic so that the team can attend to a student quickly if required.
- A well-lit, well-ventilated room, with adequate cooling and heating, free of clutter, with a separate entry and exit in which to vaccinate students, such as the school hall. It is preferable that the room is on the ground floor, so students do not have to walk up or down any stairs after the immunisation, and for ease of set-up for the immunisation team.
- Privacy for students during immunisation (where appropriate).
- Easy access to a toilet and/or hand washing facility.
- Separate assembly and recovery areas.
- One desk and two chairs (swivel chairs preferred) for each immunisation team member and a couple of extra tables and chairs for nursing staff to prepare vaccines.
- A separate desk and chair for the administrative staff, to be placed at the entrance to the immunisation area.
- A few gym mats (for students who do not feel well as the vaccinator may want to observe a student for a short time).
- Please note: the immunisation team carries its own mobile phone in case of an emergency.
- A copy of the school's emergency evacuation details (as outlined in initial letter).

Following immunisation

- After immunisation all students will be given an Immunisation Record slip to take home.
- Students will be asked to sit in the adjacent 'recovery' area for a minimum of 15 minutes following vaccination. Once the observation period is over, students may return to their scheduled activities.
- If a student with a 'Yes' consent is not immunised, the immunisation team will send an email to their parents re a catch up at a clinic or GP.
- The immunisation team is specially trained to deal with emergencies. The team will remain at your school for at least 15 minutes after the final student has been vaccinated to ensure that all vaccinated students have not experienced any reactions following immunisation.

After the immunisation team departs

If a student feels faint or nauseous, lay them down flat in a cool area and give them a drink of cold water. Any student that feels unwell should be sent to the school sick bay and parents/legal guardian/ authorised person should be contacted.

If a student is experiencing some discomfort at the site of the injection, apply a cold cloth or ice pack to the injection site. Do not rub the injection site.

If necessary, seek medical attention (as per your school procedures) or call the Queensland Ambulance Service on 000 and contact the parent/legal guardian/authorised person.

Year 7 students who consent to the HPV vaccine will need to attend two school clinics that will be at least six months apart. Only one consent form is required to administer both of these doses. If a child moves schools between clinics they should be advised to notify the school immunisation team of their school change.

For further information contact:

Gold Coast Public Health Unit

T: 1800 940 750

E: admin.immunisegc@health.qld.gov.au

W: www.health.qld.gov.au/immuniseGC

Appendix 1

Sample letter for parents, legal guardians or authorised person

Immunisation program comes to school

Dear parents/legal guardians/authorised person,

Gold Coast Public Health Unit is providing free vaccinations for all Year 7 and Year 10 students, on *[insert date/s]*, as part of Queensland Health's annual School Immunisation Program.

All Year 7 and Year 10 students are being offered free vaccinations as recommended on the National Immunisation Program to protect against vaccine preventable diseases.

Year 7 students will be offered human papillomavirus (HPV) and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (whooping cough) vaccination.

Year 10 students will be offered meningococcal ACWY vaccination.

The Public Health Act 2005 authorises school principals to disclose student and parent information to Gold Coast Health, the school immunisation provider, so they can follow up with the parents/legal guardians of students who do not return a consent form.

If you do not submit an immunisation form, you may be contacted by the Gold Coast Public Health immunisation team to check that you have been offered the opportunity for your child to participate in the free program.

The immunisations will be conducted by a team of experienced registered immunisation program nurses.

A consent invitation will be emailed to you by the Gold Coast Public Health Unit. Please read the information included carefully, complete and submit the online consent form to advise if you do or do not wish your child to be vaccinated at school.

Alternatively, there are a small number of paper consent packs available from the school office. These will need to be returned to the school.

Parents/legal guardian/authorised persons are encouraged to ensure their children have breakfast on the morning of vaccination.

For more information about diseases, vaccines or School Immunisation Program, visit <https://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/immunisation> or phone 1800 940 750.

Yours sincerely,
[Principal]

Appendix 2 – Year 7 clinics

Sample text for school newsletter/social media

Social Media

Year 7 school vaccinations happening soon!

The Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team will be providing vaccinations to all year 7 students on *[insert date]*.

You should have received an email from admin.immunisegc@health.qld.gov.au.

If you haven't received this email you can email above address, phone 1800 940750 or collect a paper consent pack from the school administration office.

You will need to complete a consent form even if you do not wish to have your child vaccinated.

For more information call Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team on 1800 940 750 or visit www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/immunisation/school-immunisation-programs

Newsletter – general

Newsletter

Year 7 school vaccinations happening soon!

The Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team will be providing vaccinations to all year 7 students on *[insert date]*.

You should have received an email from admin.immunisegc@health.qld.gov.au to the address you have nominated with the school (please check your junk mail folder).

If you haven't received this email you can contact Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team on 1800 940 750 or drop into the school office to collect a hard copy form.

Newsletter – day/week of vaccination

Reminder School Vaccinations happening for year 7 student tomorrow.

- Please ensure you have discussed with your child whether they are/are not having vaccinations done.
- Make sure your child has breakfast on day of vaccination.
- Your child will be given an aftercare slip which includes information on vaccinations given and what to do in the unlikely event that they experience any reactions.
- If your child is absent, you will be sent an email from the school immunisation team regarding catch-up options.
- If you haven't completed a consent form, please contact Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team on 1800 940 750 to discuss your options.

Appendix 3 – Year 10 clinics

Sample text for school newsletter/social media

Social Media

Year 10 school vaccinations happening soon!

The Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team will be providing vaccinations to all year 10 students on *[insert date]*.

You should have received an email from admin.immunisegc@health.qld.gov.au.

If you haven't received this email you can email above address, phone 1800 940750 or collect a paper consent pack from the school administration office.

You will need to complete a consent form even if you do not wish to have your child vaccinated.

For more information call Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team on 1800 940 750 or visit www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/immunisation/school-immunisation-program.

Newsletter – general

Newsletter

Year 10 school vaccinations happening soon!

The Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team will be providing vaccinations to all year 10 students on *[insert date]*.

You should have received an email from admin.immunisegc@health.qld.gov.au to the address you have nominated with the school (please check your junk mail folder).

If you haven't received this email you can contact Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team on 1800 940 750 or drop into the school office to collect a hard copy form.

Newsletter – day/week of vaccination

Reminder School Vaccinations happening for year 10 student tomorrow.

- Please ensure you have discussed with your child whether they are/are not having vaccinations done.
- Make sure your child has breakfast on day of vaccination.
- Your child will be given an aftercare slip which includes information on vaccinations given and what to do in the unlikely event that they experience any reactions.
- If your child is absent, you will be sent an email from the school immunisation team regarding catch-up options.
- If you haven't completed a consent form, please contact Gold Coast Public Health's immunisation team on 1800 940 750 to discuss your options.