

# Fact Sheet: School Exclusion during Disease Outbreaks

## What is student school exclusion and why is it necessary?

The basis for immunization law is to protect the community from risks from exposure to infectious diseases. Student school exclusion means that children who are infected with an infectious disease are not allowed to return to school until they are no longer a risk to others. Exclusion may also apply to unimmunized persons who may be incubating a contagious disease and are capable of spreading the disease to others.

## What is the legal basis for student school exclusion?

Michigan law requires the exclusion from school attendance of any pupil who has not been immunized properly according to the state law. If a student is not fully immunized, the law also requires the submission of a written waiver for immunizations based on medical contraindications, or based on religious or personal parental objections. It is specified on the immunization waiver forms that children who have not been properly immunized may be subject to temporary exclusion from school attendance in order to quarantine a potentially exposed individual.

The local health department under the Michigan Public Health Code is authorized to protect the public's health and prevent the spread of disease. When there is cause to believe that an exposure to a contagious disease has occurred, that exposed person may be temporarily excluded from the school. The exclusion continues until a local public health officer no longer considers the exposed person a risk.

The Public Health department respects the confidentiality rights of students and parents which shall be strictly observed in accordance with Michigan Law.

## How is the length of time for exclusion calculated?

The length of exclusion depends on the incubation period of the disease and testing results. These are based on the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics *Red Book*, and Heymann's *Control of Communicable Diseases*. Exclusions will be determined on the basis of available clinical information by public health authorities. School superintendents and staff will be in regular communication with the local health department regarding the appropriate duration of exclusion.

## Prevention

- The best protection from diseases is prevention, including immunizations.
- Schools can prevent many illnesses by making sure the immunizations of students and staff are up to date.
- For more specific information, the following links are available on our Public Health website:
  - [Steps to Minimize the Spread of Disease](#) Fact Sheet
  - [Communicable Disease](#) Fact Sheets
  - [Common Communicable Diseases for Schools/ Preschools](#)

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self -diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.*

