

# School Immunisation Program

## Information for parents about the Queensland School Immunisation Program

### Frequently asked questions

#### About the School Immunisation Program

The Queensland School Immunisation Program offers free immunisations for Year 7 and Year 10 students. In Year 7, Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine offers timely protection prior to HPV exposure. A booster dose of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine offers ongoing protection against these diseases. For Year 10, meningococcal vaccines (ACWY and B) protect students when they are at greatest risk of contracting invasive meningococcal disease.

#### How does it operate?

The School Immunisation Program commenced as a statewide program in Queensland in 2007 as the most efficient and effective way to immunise adolescents. School immunisation service providers (either Hospital and Health Services or its contracted provider) are School Health Program providers that visit schools and immunise students. To be immunised in the School Immunisation Program, students must return a consent form (or complete online consent) signed by their parent, legal guardian or authorised person. If consent is not provided, the student is not immunised.

#### What is the legislation relating to disclosing student and parent, legal guardian or authorised person information?

If you **do not complete online consent, do not return a consent form, or return an incomplete form**, information about you and your child may be provided by the school to the School Health Program provider (a Hospital and Health Service or its contracted provider) under section 213AD of the *Public Health Act 2005*, to enable follow-up about School Immunisation Program. If your school's program is delivered by a contracted provider, they may either contact you directly or share your information with the relevant Hospital and Health Service to follow up.

The *Public Health Act 2005* requires school Principals to provide information to approved school immunisation service providers for the purposes of following up the parent, legal guardian or authorised person of students who have not returned a consent form or confirmed consent. This includes:

- the name and date of birth of a student
- the name, telephone number, email address and postal address of a parent, legal guardian or authorised person of a student, and
- any other information prescribed by regulation about a student. This may include the sex of the student, which class or group they are attached to, the languages spoken at the student's home and whether the student identifies as being as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

**Parents who return a consent card indicating 'No to Immunisation' will not be followed up by the school immunisation service provider.**



## How does disclosing student and parent, legal guardian or authorised person information benefit the school immunisation program?

In some schools a large proportion of consent forms do not get returned to school, or online consent isn't provided. This means parents, legal guardians or authorised persons may not be receiving information about the program and may not be given the opportunity for their child to be immunised.

Disclosing student and parent, legal guardian or authorised person information means the school immunisation service providers will be able to determine those who have and have not consented, and directly follow-up with the parents, legal guardians or authorised persons of students who have not provider consent. This direct follow-up ensures all parents, legal guardians or authorised persons are offered the opportunity for their child to participate in this important school health program and protect their child against vaccine preventable diseases when they are at period of increased risk. It may also assist in making decisions about their child's immunisation needs, as families can speak directly to the school immunisation service provider.

## Is the Principal required to pass on student and parent, legal guardian or authorised person information to a school immunisation service provider?

Yes, unless the principal determines 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.

## If my child returns a 'yes' consent form to school, will I be contacted?

If your child returns a consent form to school, you will not be contacted unless the information you provided on the consent form is not clear or incomplete.

## What if I don't return a consent form?

If you do not complete online consent (if offered to your school), do not return a consent form, or return an incomplete form, information about you and your child may be provided by the school to the School Health Program provider (a Hospital and Health Service or its contracted provider) under section 213AD of the *Public Health Act 2005*, to enable follow up about the immunisation offer. If your school's program is delivered by a contracted provider, they may either contact you directly or share your information with the relevant Hospital and Health Service to follow up.

## Can I decline consent for my child to participate in the school immunisation program?

Yes. You will need to complete the consent form to record 'No to immunisation' either on a paper form or through an online system (depending on what is used by your school). This will ensure you are not contacted by the school immunisation service provider. Families who have not completed the consent process may be contacted by the school immunisation service provider, which may include a Hospital and Health Service or its contract provider, to check if they want their child to participate.

Participation in the school immunisation program is voluntary, and consent to immunisation can be withdrawn at any time by contacting the school immunisation service provider.

## What if I want my child to be immunised by a different provider?

If you would prefer your child to be immunised at a non-school-based clinic, your child is still able to access free adolescent vaccines offered as part of the Queensland Immunisation Schedule. Please contact your doctor or other immunisation provider (e.g. a pharmacy or a community immunisation clinic) to arrange an appointment. Please note adolescent vaccines are free; however, a consultation fee may be charged by the provider.

### What if my child misses the school clinic?

If your child misses their school immunisation clinic, they can be immunised at any of the following immunisation service providers:

- at a catch-up school immunisation clinic (check with your school who your local immunisation service provider is, and if a catch-up clinic will be provided),
- at your doctor or other primary care provider,
- at a pharmacist,
- at a free community immunisation clinic (if offered by your local Hospital and Health Service, council or other immunisation service provider).

While it's best to have immunisations on time, if your child misses the school immunisation clinic during Year 7 or Year 10, funded catch-up vaccines are available up until the adolescent's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday (or until their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday for the HPV vaccine).

Some providers may charge a consultation fee; however, the adolescent vaccines are free. Please contact your local immunisation service provider to arrange an appointment.

### How will the information be protected?

All school immunisation service providers are bound to comply with the Queensland *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*. This Act stipulates the requirements for the secure collection, use, storage and disposal of personal information to be followed by school immunisation program providers. For more information, please visit the Queensland School Immunisation Program privacy information sheets here: [School Immunisation Program | Queensland Health](#)

Your personal information is protected under the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*. You have the right to access and correct your or your child's personal information. For more information, or to view our Privacy Policy or make a complaint, call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or visit the Queensland Health [website](#): <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/global/privacy>

### How will information be transferred, used and stored?

Student and parent, legal guardian or authorised person information disclosed under the *Public Health Act 2005*, and information on the immunisation consent form will be securely stored and only accessed by authorised staff. School immunisation service providers must store and dispose of student information in accordance with the Public Records Act 2023 (Qld).

Following the school clinic, the school immunisation provider will update the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) with relevant information related to the immunisation. Please visit the Australian Government's website to find out more information about the privacy policy for the Australian Immunisation Register: <https://www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/website-privacy-policy/privacy-policy-for-the-australian-immunisation-register>

### Where can I get more information?

- Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- Visit Queensland Health's Immunisation website: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation/adolescents>
- Your local Hospital and Health Service: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/health-system/hhs>