Health examination and immunization requirements for school attendance

The State of Illinois requires that students obtain a physical examination at entry to kindergarten, sixth and ninth grades. Vaccination against a number of diseases at specified intervals is also required.

State law also requires that students without those exams and/or vaccinations are excluded from school attendance unless certain exceptions are met. The valid exemptions in Illinois are those based on medical reason, written by a health care provider, or religious reason, written by a parent or guardian.

In addition, students transferring from out of state are allowed an extra 30 days to meet the requirements.

As written in school code, schools are to exclude students who do not have either the health exam or vaccines by Oct. 15 or an earlier date, if established by the local school board. Specifically, the law states: “the local school authority shall exclude that child from school until such time as the child presents proof of having had the health examination as required and presents proof of having received those required immunizations which are medically possible to receive immediately. During a child's exclusion from school for noncompliance with this subsection, the child's parents or legal guardian shall be considered in violation of Section 26-1 and subject to any penalty imposed by Section 26-10. This subsection (5) does not apply to dental examinations and eye examinations.”

Appointments beyond the mandatory exclusion date may be accepted only for student transferring from out of state. State law allows an "out-of-state transfer student [who] does not have the proof required under this subsection (5) before October 15 of the current year or whatever date is set by the school district, ... may only attend classes (i) if he or she has proof that an appointment for the required vaccinations has been scheduled with a party authorized to submit proof of the required vaccinations. If the proof of vaccination required under this subsection (5) is not submitted within 30 days after the student is permitted to attend classes, then the student is not to be permitted to attend classes until proof of the vaccinations has been properly submitted.

For more information contact Jessica Gerdes, at Jgerdes@isbe.net or 312-814-5560.

Reference: school code Section 27-8.1, from Public Act 97-0910