



March 30, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

Please review the South Carolina Immunization Requirements for Childcare and School for the 2021-2022 school year. Included you will find general guidance and specific requirements for childcare and school attendance.

Childcare and school immunization requirements are minimum requirements. Several other vaccines are recommended to protect all children against diseases, but they are not required for childcare or school entry. We encourage you to recommend all age-appropriate vaccines for children.

**Changes for the 2021-2022 School Year:**

7<sup>th</sup> grade has been added to the requirement for (2) doses of varicella. A child with a positive history of the disease is considered immune and is exempt from this requirement.

9<sup>th</sup> grade has been added to the requirement for three (3) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine with at least one (1) dose received on or after the fourth birthday.

1<sup>st</sup> grade has been added to the requirement for 2 doses of Hepatitis A vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 6 months.

With the launch of the Statewide Immunization Online Network (SIMON) this past year, the current Immunization Certificate, the DHEC 4024 was implemented. The previous Immunization Certificate, the DHEC 2740, was phased out with the implementation of SIMON. However, due to the burden of COVID-19, we have extended the grace period to utilize the 2740 if needed until June 30, 2022.

Doses documented on the SC Certificate of Immunization (DHEC 4024 or DHEC 2740) must be valid according to accepted practice standards. DHEC supports the provision of all recommended vaccines in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and CDC General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization.

We appreciate your continuing efforts to protect South Carolina children from vaccine-preventable diseases. Any questions may be directed to DHEC's Immunization Division at 800-277-4687 or [immunize@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:immunize@dhec.sc.gov).

Sincerely,

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## General Guidance for South Carolina Immunization Requirements

A valid South Carolina Certificate of Immunization for all enrolled children, 3 months of age and older, must be maintained by public and private childcare facilities (as defined in SC Code of Laws Section 63-13-20); public, private, and parochial schools, grades kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade; and child development programs under the control of the Department of Education.

[South Carolina state law](#) requires a valid SC Certificate of Immunization or valid exemption. Children without a valid certificate or exemption will not be allowed to attend childcare and/or school. Failure to comply with this law may result in audits and/or legal action.

Doses documented on the immunization certificate must be valid doses according to accepted practice standards for the [minimum age\(s\) and intervals](#), as well as all [ACIP vaccine specific recommendations](#) and [CDC General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization](#).

For unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children, refer to currently published ACIP Catch-Up Schedule for number of doses necessary to complete the vaccine series and meet the requirement.

Pursuant to Section 44-29-180, South Carolina Code of Laws, and South Carolina Regulation 61-8, students may be exempt from these immunization requirements for the following reasons:

**Medical Exemption:** The Medical Exemption section of the SC Certificate of Immunization should only be completed when a child has a permanent or temporary medical reason for exclusion from receipt of vaccine(s). The Medical Exemption section must be completed by a licensed Physician (MD or DO) or his/her authorized representative (e.g. Physician's Assistant or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse). For temporary medical exemptions, an expiration date in the future is documented when next immunizations are due.

**Religious Exemption:** A religious exemption may be granted to any student whose parents, parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis signs the appropriate section of the South Carolina Certificate of Religious Exemption stating that one or more immunizations conflicts with their religious beliefs. The South Carolina Certificate of Religious Exemption can only be obtained from a DHEC health department. The parent or guardian must sign the DHEC form in the presence of a notary. This exemption may require renewal.

**Special Exemptions:** A SC Certificate of Special Exemption may be issued by the school to a student that has been unable to secure immunizations or documentation of immunizations already received. This exemption is only valid for 30 calendar days for the current enrollment and may be issued only once.

### **Resources:**

ACIP vaccine recommendations: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/index.html>

ACIP schedules <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/index.html>

CDC General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/general-recs/index.html>

Minimum ages and intervals

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/appendices/A/age-interval-table.pdf> -

## South Carolina Immunization Requirements for Childcare 2021-2022

The following minimum requirements are necessary for childcare. These requirements will be effective as of July 1, 2021. This includes preschool attendance for 4K programs and younger. An SC Certificate of Immunization with an expiration date is acceptable to allow for age-appropriate completion of vaccination series. No child can attend childcare or preschool for more than 30 days past the expiration date of the certificate.

Vaccine	Requirement
<b>Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis</b>	Four (4) doses of any combination of DTP, DT, or DTaP vaccine.
<b>Polio</b>	Three (3) doses of any combination of oral or inactivated polio vaccine
<b>Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib)</b>	Current, age-appropriate Hib vaccination according to the currently published immunization schedule. For children 15-59 months of age who have not yet completed age-appropriate Hib vaccination, one (1) dose of Hib vaccine at or after 15 months of age is required. Hib vaccine is not required for children 5 years of age and older.
<b>Measles, Mumps and Rubella</b>	One (1) dose of MMR vaccine received on or after the first birthday
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	2 doses of Hepatitis A vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 6 months for any child born on or after January 1, 2019. Vaccine series must be started by 18 months of age.
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	Three (3) doses of hepatitis B vaccine with the third dose received $\geq$ 24 weeks of age and at least 16 weeks after the first dose
<b>Varicella</b>	One (1) dose of varicella vaccine received on or after the first birthday or positive history of disease
<b>Pneumococcal</b>	Current, age-appropriate pneumococcal vaccination according to the currently published immunization schedule. For children aged 24-59 months who have not yet completed any age-appropriate pneumococcal vaccination, one (1) dose of PCV13 on or after the 2nd birthday is required. Pneumococcal vaccine is not required for children 5 years of age and older.

**Please note:** Children enrolled in grade 5K or greater and enrolled in a childcare facility (e.g., after school and/or summer program) must meet school immunization requirements and have a valid SC Certificate of Immunization on file at the childcare and school facility.

Pursuant to Section 44-29-180, South Carolina Code of Laws, "...no owner or operator of a public or private childcare facility as defined in Section 63-13-20 may...enroll or retain a child or person who cannot produce satisfactory evidence of having been vaccinated or immunized so often as directed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control. Records of vaccinations or immunizations must be maintained by the institution, school or day care facility to which the child or person has been admitted."

## South Carolina Immunization Requirements for School 2021-2022

The following minimum immunization requirements are necessary for a child to be admitted to any public, private, or parochial school, grades 5K-12:

Vaccine	Grade	GradeLevelRequirement
<b>Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis</b>	5K-12	Four (4) doses of any combination of DTP, DT, DTaP, Td, or Tdap vaccine with at least one (1) dose received on or after the fourth birthday. Refer to the currently published ACIP Catch Up Schedule for guidance on recommendations for students who are behind. For children 7 years of age and older following a catch up schedule, 3 doses may be acceptable.
<b>Tdap Booster</b>	7-12	One (1) dose of Tdap vaccine received on or after the 7 <sup>th</sup> birthday  This dose of Tdap may be included as one of the doses needed to meet the requirement for Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis.
<b>Polio</b>	5K-9	Three (3) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine with at least one (1) dose received on or after the fourth birthday
	10-12	Three (3) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) with at least one (1) dose received on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday <b>OR</b> four (4) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) before 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday (if all doses separated by at least 4 weeks) Follow CDC recommendations for students 18 years of age and older
<b>Measles, Mumps and Rubella</b>	5K - 12	Two (2) doses of MMR vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 4 weeks
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	5K-1	2 doses of Hepatitis A vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 6 months.
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	5K - 12	Three (3) doses of hepatitis B vaccine, with the third dose received $\geq 24$ weeks of age and at least 16 weeks after the first dose
<b>Varicella</b>	5K - 7	Two (2) doses of varicella vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 4 weeks or a positive history of disease.
	8-12	One (1) dose of varicella vaccine received on or after the first birthday or positive history of disease

**Please note:**

- Children enrolled in 4K programs and younger must meet Childcare Requirements, even if attendance is in a school setting.
- Children enrolled in 5K through Grade 12 must meet School Requirements.
- In general, titers may only be accepted as evidence of immunity to Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella

Pursuant to Section 44-29-180, South Carolina Code of Laws, and South Carolina Regulation 61-8, “no superintendent of an institution of learning, no school board or principal of a school...may...enroll or retain a child or person who cannot produce satisfactory evidence of having been vaccinated or immunized so often as directed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control.... Records of vaccinations or immunizations must be maintained by the institution, school or day care facility to which the child or person has been admitted.”