

Immunisation Entry Requirements for School and Child Care

A guide for parents and guardians

The *Public Health Act 1997* includes provisions designed to help prevent children from catching and spreading a number of childhood vaccine preventable diseases. The Act states that a person in charge of a school or child care facility must require a parent or guardian to provide information about a child's immunisations when the child is about to attend that school or facility for the first time.

The diseases covered by these provisions are:

- Diphtheria
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Polio
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) infection
- Mumps
- Rubella (german measles)
- Measles
- Rotavirus
- Meningococcal infection
- Varicella

These infections are potentially life threatening diseases that children who are not immunised are prone to catch and spread. Immunisation is the only effective defence, and it is necessary to have as many children vaccinated as possible.

What information do you need to provide about your child's immunisation?

When your child is starting school or child care, you must present information in writing stating whether or not your child has been immunised against each of the diseases above. The ways you can do this are described below.

Even if this is not your child's first year at school or commencing child care, it is likely you will be asked for this information. It is important to provide this information when requested to ensure that your child is not unnecessarily excluded from school or child care in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.

Does this mean my child must be vaccinated?

No. If your child is not vaccinated or you have not provided proof of vaccination, he or she may be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at the school or in child care.

What do I need to do?

To get your child's immunisation history you can:

- Use your child's Personal Health Record as proof of immunisation, if each vaccine administered, the doctor or council staff member has clearly signed and printed their name.
- Ask your doctor or local council for signed information on a letterhead saying exactly which diseases your child has been immunised against and when this happened.
- Contact the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) on freecall 1800 653809. The ACIR routinely provide immunisation history statements to parents when their child is commencing school but may also provide these to parents upon request.
- Requesting a printout of your child's immunisation history from your local Medicare office.