



March 1, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

Each year the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) provides the South Carolina Immunization Requirements for Childcare and School. This communication provides the school and childcare entry requirements for immunizations for the 2023-2024 school year. Included are 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. Although they may not be required for childcare or school entry, DHEC recommends all age-appropriate vaccines for children.

Changes for the 2023 – 2024 School Year:

8th grade: one (1) dose of Tdap vaccine on or after the 10th birthday.

9th grade: two (2) doses of varicella. A child with a positive history of the disease is considered immune and is exempt from this requirement.

11th grade: three (3) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine with at least one (1) dose received on or after the fourth birthday.

3rd grade: two (2) doses of hepatitis A vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 6 months.

The current Immunization Certificate is DHEC form 4024. The prior version of the Immunization Certificate was the DHEC 2740. Children with valid DHEC 2740 certificates do not need an updated DHEC 4024 certificate if the DHEC 2740 was (1) issued on or before June 30, 2022, and (2) no further immunizations are needed through 12th grade.

Doses documented on the SC Certificate of Immunization (DHEC 4024) 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.

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 12th 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 should be documented when next immunizations are due.

Religious Exemption: A religious exemption may be granted to any student whose 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 Exemption: 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 2023-2024

The following minimum requirements are necessary for childcare. These requirements will be effective as of July 1, 2023. This includes preschool attendance for 4K programs and younger. **A 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.

By This Age:	Minimum Number of Required Doses:							
3 months ¹	2 Hep B	1 DTaP ²	1 Hib ³	1 PCV13 ⁴	1 IPV			
5 months	2 Hep B	2 DTaP ²	2 Hib ³	2 PCV13 ⁴	2 IPV			
7 months	2 Hep B	3 DTaP ²	2-3 Hib ³	3 PCV13 ⁴	2 IPV			
13 months	2 Hep B	3 DTaP ²	2-3 Hib ³	3 PCV13 ⁴	2 IPV			
16 months	2 Hep B	3 DTaP ²	3-4 Hib ³	4 PCV13 ⁴	2 IPV	1 MMR	1 VAR	
19 months	3 Hep B	4 DTaP ²	3-4 Hib ³	4 PCV13 ⁴	3 IPV	1 MMR	1 VAR	1 Hep A ⁵
2 years	3 Hep B	4 DTaP ²	3-4 Hib ³	4 PCV13 ⁴	3 IPV	1 MMR	1 VAR	2 Hep A ⁵
4 years (childcare and/or 4-K)	3 Hep B	4 DTaP ²	3-4 Hib ³	4 PCV13 ⁴	3 IPV	1 MMR	1 VAR	2 Hep A ⁵

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."

¹ Minimum immunization requirement for childcare entry for all infants under 3 months of age.

² Any combination of DTP, DT, or DTaP vaccine.

³ **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) 3 Dose Series** (*PedvaxHIB*) – One dose by 3 months; second dose by 5 months and third dose by 16 months of age; OR, **4 Dose Series** (*ActHIB, Hiberix, or Pentacel*) – One dose by 3 months; second dose by 5 months; third dose by 7 months and fourth dose 16 months of age. For children 15 – 59 months of age who have not yet completed an age-appropriate Hib vaccination series, 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.

⁴ **Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)** – 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. PCV13 is not required for children 5 years of age and older.

⁵ **Hepatitis A (Hep A)** – One dose must be administered no later than 18 months of age.

South Carolina Immunization Requirements for School 2023-2024

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	Grade Level Requirement
Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis	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.
Tdap Booster	7 – 8	One (1) dose of Tdap vaccine. This dose of Tdap may be included as one of the doses needed to meet the requirement for Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis. The vaccine must be given on or after the child's 10 th birthday.
	9 - 12	One (1) dose of Tdap vaccine. This dose of Tdap may be included as one of the doses needed to meet the requirement for Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis. The vaccine must be given on or after the child's 7 th birthday.
Polio	5K – 11	Three (3) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine with at least one (1) dose received on or after the fourth birthday
	12	Three (3) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) with at least one (1) dose received on or after the 4 th birthday OR four (4) doses of oral and/or inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) before 4 th birthday (if all doses separated by at least 4 weeks) Follow CDC recommendations for students 18 years of age and older. If the polio series includes OPV, please refer to CDC guidance on whether to count the OPV vaccine(s) as part of the polio vaccine series.
Measles, Mumps and Rubella	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
Hepatitis A	5K – 3	Two (2) doses of Hepatitis A vaccine with both doses received on or after the first birthday and separated by at least 6 months.
Hepatitis B	5K – 12	Three (3) doses of hepatitis B vaccine, with the third dose received ≥ 24 weeks of age and at least 16 weeks after the first dose
Varicella	5K – 9	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.
	10 – 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.

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."