



A child entering pre-kindergarten shall be no younger than four years of age on or before September 30. A child entering kindergarten shall be no younger than five years of age on or before September 30. Kindergarten is mandatory for all students prior to enrolling in first grade. Students legally enrolled in an approved kindergarten program in another state may transfer to a kindergarten program in Tennessee if they were five years of age on or before December 31.

Students with disabilities (ages 3-4) are served through Individual Education Programs (IEP) in the Pre-K programs. IEPs must involve a representative from the Department of Special Education.

All students entering MNPS must present proof of immunization, physical examination and record of birth. A student shall be enrolled using the name that appears on student's certificate of live birth or certificate of birth by adoption, if the adoption occurred prior to the student's entrance into school, and such student shall be known by such lawful name in all facets of school records, report cards, student testing and any school activities (TCA § 49-6-5106). For English Language Learners (ELL), the student shall be enrolled using the name that appears on the passport or visa. Additionally, verification of legal address, proof of legal custody and the presence of a legal guardian are required. Non-native English speaking students must present this documentation at the ELL office. If a child meets the definition of homeless, these records are not required prior to enrollment. Appropriate time shall be provided for the parents/guardians to obtain the necessary information. The principal may call the student's previous school and forward the Release of Information form to request the records be sent.

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### **Immunizations and Health Examinations**

Proof of immunization for Pre-K students is established by a *Tennessee Pre-School Immunization Certificate* signed by a health provider. Proof of immunization for **K-12** students is established by a *Tennessee School Immunization Certificate* signed by a health provider. Documentation for K-12 students in the process of receiving immunizations is the *Temporary Tennessee Certificate of Immunization* signed by a health provider. Upon completion of the required immunizations, a permanent Tennessee School Immunization Certificate is issued. Immunization certificates and any attachments must be filed in the student's cumulative school record.

Immunization certificates can be any color paper including white and on any weight paper. **Schools should not provide parents or students with blank immunization certificates.** Health providers will provide the forms. If a school distributes a copy of the immunization certificate for clarification purposes, **SAMPLE** must be written across the identifying information section.

In order to provide parents with accurate information, the school staff responsible for enrolling students should be knowledgeable of the current immunization requirements. Under Health Department guidelines, only doses listed with dates are valid. If more than one dose is required, all dates of administration must be entered and appear on the immunization certificate. If a parent provides adequate documentation of the previous doses, the immunization schedule is to be adjusted by the Health Department or by a private health provider.

**General Entry Requirements:**

In order to enroll in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, children must show Tennessee School Immunization Certificate with immunization against seven diseases:

- Diphtheria, pertussis (“whooping cough”), tetanus (the DTaP shot)
- Polio (the IPV shot)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (the MMR shot). Note: Before entry into grades K-12, two MMR doses are required, with the first dose given on or after the first birthday. Because MMR is less likely to protect the child if given before the first birthday, the first dose must be given no more than 4 days before the first birthday. Doses given earlier must be repeated to comply with the school entry requirement.

**Limited Entry Requirements:**

- Immunization against hepatitis B is required only before entry into kindergarten or seventh grade. There is no hepatitis B immunization requirement for entry into other grades.
- Immunization against or history of varicella disease (chicken pox) is required only before entry into kindergarten or licensed child care facilities. This is not required for entry into other grades.
- The Department of Human Services (DHS) requires that children in DHS-licensed day care facilities be age-appropriately immunized against hemophilus influenza type B (“HiB meningitis”) in state regulation 1240-4-1-.06. This is not required for school entry.

**Immunization Exemptions:**

- Religious: In the absence of an epidemic or immediate threat of an epidemic, a religious exemption to immunization requirements is allowed by state law (TCA § 49-

6-5001). By law, the parent or guardian must provide to the school a signed, written statement that such immunization conflicts with their religious tenets and practices, affirmed under the penalties of perjury. The statement **does not** require notarization.

- **Medical:** Any immunization shall not be required if a qualified physician certifies in a written statement that the immunization would be in any manner harmful to the child (TCA § 49-6-5001). An explanation of the medical reason for exemption is not required.

**Recommended (not required) Vaccines:**

- Several vaccines against serious childhood diseases are recommended for all children, but are not required for school attendance. These include vaccines against pneumococcal disease, hepatitis A, influenza, and, beginning at age 11, meningococcal disease. All children should be age-appropriately immunized with all recommended vaccines to prevent these serious childhood infections.

**Non-compliance of Immunizations:**

According to TCA § 49-6-5001 and DSOP # 1745, children must be immunized prior to attending any school. If a child is identified as being out of compliance with the immunization standard, the principal is responsible for notifying the parent/guardian in writing of the deficiency. The letter shall request that the parent/guardian take child to the Health Department or to a private physician to obtain the immunization. In addition, the letter shall indicate that the parent has 5 days to return the required immunization certificate to the school. A copy of the dated letter shall be kept in the school. Following the allotted time period and to be in compliance with the law, the child shall not be allowed to return to school until the immunization certificate is presented to the school.

**Students transferring from an out-of-state school**

Students must provide the school the Tennessee School Immunization Certificate or Temporary Tennessee Certificate of Immunization before being admitted. Students can have an appointment scheduled for the required physical examination but must have the proper immunization to be enrolled.

The appointment for the physical exam must be scheduled and completed within 30 days. The parent is responsible for providing the school the physical results the day after the scheduled appointment. On the 31<sup>st</sup> day, students will be excluded from school until proof of a health examination is provided. A prior physical exam received within the United States can be used if it is within six months of the date of entry into school.

**Students transferring from another school in Tennessee**

Students have 30 days or until the cumulative record is received to show proof of immunizations. If the immunization record is not received within this time frame or shows deficiencies, the student cannot return to school until proof of required immunizations is provided.

Students have 30 days or until the cumulative record is received to show proof of a health examination. The examination must have occurred within six months of the student's entry

date. If the health examination requirement has not been met, students have 30 days from the receipt of the record to provide proof of a health examination. Local schools must document communication to the parents of the needed examination. On the 31<sup>st</sup> day, students will be excluded from the school until proof a health examination is provided.

***References/Authority***

TCA § 49-6-5001  
TCA § 49-6-5106  
DSOP 1301