

Secondary School Vaccine Program

Specialist Schools - Program Guide 2024

The purpose of this document is to acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of schools and local councils in delivering the Secondary School Vaccine Program.

Boroondara City Council - Immunisation Services

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Secondary School Vaccine Program

The City of Boroondara has responsibility under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to provide immunisation services to children living or being educated within their municipal district.

Secondary schools have responsibility in supporting the Victorian Secondary School Vaccine Program as per School Policy Advisory Guide ([Immunisation: Policy | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/immunisation/policy)).

The aim of this program within specialist schools is to provide a safe vaccination experience that limits wherever possible the anxiety and stress experienced by children who are reluctant or fearful to receive injections. Our team is experienced in working with adolescents with mild and moderate needle phobia. In some circumstances, the school setting is not appropriate for vaccinating a student and we will provide recommendations to alternate services in these cases. Educating parents early of alternate service options will assist them to navigate wait times and/or coordinate their child's vaccinations with other medical visits.

New council triage system

A new triage system is introduced to distinguish which students can be vaccinated at school. In consultation with school staff and families, we will ensure a suitable vaccination plan for these students. It is critical to plan how to best prepare a student for their immunisation experience to minimize harmful effects and to reduce unplanned and detrimental restraint practices.

- **Green category** – These students can follow simple instructions, participate in other health care interventions with minimal distress, understand basic rationale for immunisation, are likely to agree to vaccination on the day and can communicate verbally. They are suitable candidates for receiving vaccinations at school.
- **Orange category** – These students generally experience anxiety with change of routine and health care interventions. They may not be able to communicate verbally or follow instructions. They will require time to build rapport. However, with a support plan in place, they are likely to have a successful outcome with school vaccination.
- **Red category** – These students have previously had serious behavioural responses to healthcare interventions, may have required restraint at school, and have expressed significant worry about immunisation. These students are best referred on to specialist immunisation services (note: a GP referral is required for specialist clinics)

Preparing for vaccination process

The school can play a pivotal role in ensuring the best possible experience for all involved on vaccination day. Planning and preparation are paramount to successful outcomes.

Consent collection

Prior to immunisation day, informed consent is required from parents/guardians for their child to be immunised.

- ☐ distribute immunisation information and consent forms to parents/guardians via email and obtain their digital consent for their child's immunisations
- ☐ hard copy forms are available upon request.
- ☐ school staff will monitor response rates and follow up with those parents who have not responded.

Equipment and room availability

A room should be allocated for immunisation allowing for:

- ☐ privacy for students
- ☐ a space large enough for the student, two immunisation nurses and their equipment, and a school staff member
- ☐ low stimulation, quiet and calm
- ☐ preferably not a space that students routinely use as a safe space to withdraw
- ☐ an additional area for student observation after the immunisation to monitor for any adverse effects of the immunisation.

Communication to school

Prior to immunisation day, Council immunisation staff will:

- ☐ provide the list of students who are consented to be immunised.
- ☐ share Immunisation plans for students triaged as Orange category, to ensure school staff are informed of the planned support required, including situations where a parent needs to attend.
- ☐ collaborate with the school to obtain further information or key strategies in immunising the listed students

Communication to parents/students

- ☐ School must send vaccine day information to parents regarding the wearing of loose short sleeve clothing on day of immunisation for ease of access into the upper arm.
- ☐ Teachers and families can prepare students for the experience. Appendix 2 contains resources to support conversations.

On Immunisation Day

- ☐ School staff should be prepared for immunisation day, The quick view checklist in Appendix 1 is a helpful tool.
- ☐ A trusted staff member who is familiar with student's communication method should be allocated to support each student during immunisation.
- ☐ Equipment and staff should be prepared before the student enters the immunisation room.
- ☐ The number of people in the room should be minimised to only those who are necessary to perform the immunisation and support the student.
- ☐ Staff should be aware of their role during the immunisation before the student enters the immunisation room.

Supportive strategies for students

- ☐ Students should be offered their communication resources for understanding the immunisation procedure.
- ☐ Incorporate the use the student's usual methods of calming or preparation.
- ☐ Strategies which are not recommended include threats, coercion, intimidation, restraint and promises that can't or won't be followed through.
- ☐ If the parent or carer is present, allocate them a clear role with their purpose to be a comfort and advocate for their child. Parents must not be asked to provide any clinical intervention.
- ☐ Following successful immunisation, to maximize a young person's well-being, promote their recovery and regain trust if they were anxious or distressed, it is important to:
 - offer the student an opportunity for a hug with the parent/guardian if present.
 - provide positive acknowledgement of what went well during the immunisation.
 - offer choices about what preferred activity the student wants to do next which may help to promote recovery.

When Immunisation should not go ahead

- ☐ At parent/guardian request.
- ☐ At the request of any adult present who feels that proceeding with the immunisation is too distressing for the student or is unsafe for staff or student. If this is deemed the case, a school staff member or immunisation provider can stop proceedings even where the parent asks or insists on continued attempts to immunise their child.
- ☐ If a student attempts to leave or leaves the immunisation room.
- ☐ In the context of escalating distress by the student which is unable to be relieved by the student's usual comfort measures, distraction, or verbal reassurance.
- ☐ If a student requires holding with any degree of force, or in any unacceptable way.
- ☐ If resources required to immunise the student are greater than what is available (including time, staff expertise, need for parent present and they cannot be).

Duty of care

It is the responsibility of the Immunisation team to remain at the school until all students have been vaccinated and have completed their 15-minute post-vaccination time. During this time, the Immunisation team is solely responsible for the management of all local, common and rare reactions. School staff members should report these types of reactions to the Immunisation team as soon as they become aware of these situations. The Nurse in Charge on the day will hand over their duty of care of the students to the delegated School Immunisation Coordinator once the 15-minute waiting period has lapsed from the last student who was immunised.

Unsuccessful or missed vaccinations

For students who have had an unsuccessful school vaccination attempt or were absent on the day, Council Immunisation service will send an email notification to parents regarding next steps. Options may include; attending a council community session, immunisation with the family GP or obtaining a referral to a specialist Immunisation Service.

Appendix 1: Quick view checklist for school staff

Prior to immunisation day

- ☐ Confirm immunisation day with Boroondara Council Immunisation Service in advance
- ☐ Notify parents/carers of immunisation day by distributing immunisation information to families for consent
- ☐ Provide individualised immunisation information and education to prepare students
- ☐ Share information/supporting strategies with council immunisation service on students confirmed to be vaccinated
- ☐ Allocate an appropriate room for immunisations and observation area after immunisations
- ☐ Plan staff member attendance on the day according to support needs of students

On Immunisation Day

- ☐ Organise the environment, with appropriate equipment for distracting students
- ☐ Ensure staff are aware of their role on the day of Immunisation
- ☐ Where a parent has been asked to attend as part of the individual plan, ensure the parent is aware of their role.
- ☐ Be aware of the individual immunisation plan for students triaged as orange
- ☐ Know when an Immunisation attempt should not occur or should be abandoned
- ☐ Promote student recovery
- ☐ Collaborate with Immunisation staff to complete the post-Immunisation checklist for each student

Appendix 2: Resources for student preparation:

- Social script [I will get vaccines at school \(hpvvaccine.org.au\)](http://hpvvaccine.org.au)
- [HPV vaccine resources - HPV Vaccine - Cancer Council](http://hpvvaccine.org.au)
- [Disability vaccination factsheet \(hpvvaccine.org.au\)](http://hpvvaccine.org.au)