

Important Information

About Medical or Religious Exemption from Vaccinating Your Student

What do I need to do?

- 1. Understand the risks and responsibilities**
- 2. Sign this form and return it**

North Carolina honors both religious and medical exemptions from vaccinations. Because Buncombe County has a higher than average rate of vaccine exemptions, it is important to understand that currently in our county, there is an increased likelihood your child may be exposed to vaccine-preventable disease.

Understand the risks

- Any vaccine-preventable disease can strike at any time in the U.S. because all of these diseases still circulate either in the U.S. or elsewhere in the world. Sometimes vaccine-preventable diseases cause outbreaks (that is, clusters of cases) in a given area.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases that more commonly circulate in the U.S. include whooping cough, chickenpox, Hib (a cause of meningitis), and influenza. These diseases, as well as the other vaccine-preventable diseases, can range from mild to severe and life-threatening. In most cases, there is no way to know beforehand if a child will get a mild or serious case. For many diseases, infants are more vulnerable, so younger brothers and sisters at home can be at serious risk.
- The county Health Department is available to provide objective information about these diseases and to answer any questions you want to ask about immunizations; call (828) 250-5109.

Understand the responsibilities

- Any time that your child is ill and you call 911; ride in an ambulance; visit a hospital emergency room; or visit your child's doctor or any clinic **you must tell the medical staff that your child has not received all the vaccines** recommended for his or her age.
- Your doctor will need to consider the possibility that your child has a vaccine-preventable disease. Many of these diseases are now uncommon, but they still occur.
- The people who help your child can take precautions, such as isolating your child, so that the disease does not spread to others.

Because of the potential for spread of disease, the local Department of Health may legally exclude students who are not immunized from school until the threat of an outbreak is over or the student receives the proper medication and/or immunization.

If a student has a medical exemption from a vaccination the student's parent/guardian will need to contact the student's physician for recommendations beyond exclusion from school. The student may be eligible for academic assistance if they cannot attend school.

Please read, sign and return this document:

North Carolina General Statute 130A-152(a) requires immunizations for every student in this state. I understand that my student is susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases. If at any time there is, in the opinion of public health experts, danger of a communicable disease outbreak for which an immunization is required, my student may be excluded from school until the threat of disease is past or until the vaccination is received. I know that I may readdress this issue with my student's doctor or nurse at any time and that I may change my mind and accept vaccination for my student anytime in the future.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date