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| Secondary School Immunisation Program |
| **A guide for schools** |
| **OFFICIAL** |

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The **Secondary School Immunisation Program -A guide for schools** is a practical guide provided to you by your immunisation provider to ensure a safe and successful secondary school immunisation program is delivered to eligible students.

# **Roles and responsibilities**

Councils are mandated under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/num_act/phawa200846o2008268/s24.html) to provide immunisation services to children living or being educated within their municipal district. Councils coordinate and deliver vaccine programs to secondary schools.

The current adolescent vaccine program schedule for Victorian schools is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Victoria’s School Vaccine Program

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| Vaccine | Eligibility in the school-based program | Eligibility in community setting |
| HPV (human papillomavirus)  – two injections spaced a minimum 6 months apart | Year 7 | 12 – 19 years of age |
| Diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough (pertussis)  - single injection | Year 7 | 12 – 19 years of age |
| Meningococcal A, C, W, Y  -single injection | Year 10 | 15 – 19 years of age |

* Source: [National Immunisation Program](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-immunisation-program)

# **Immunisation provider**

In this guide the council or its contractor is referred to as the immunisation provider. The role of the provider is to:

* undertake administrative tasks associated with the program
* administer vaccinations to eligible students by [Authorised Nurse Immunisers](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/immunisers-in-victoria/nurse-immunisers) on immunisation day

**Table 2: Immunisation provider’s roles and responsibilities**

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| **Coordinate** | **Consent** | **Service delivery** |
| * Initiate and maintain contact with schools * Provide schools with Council’s email and contact details * Plan school vaccination dates with schools * Provide [secondary school vaccination program agreement](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) to schools * Deliver consent forms and resources for schools to distribute * Collect returned and collated consent forms | * Review consent forms for completeness and eligibility * Follow up non-returned, incomplete, or incorrectly completed consent forms * Obtain telephone consent from parent or guardians where appropriate (Authorised Nurse Immunisers only) | * Ensure students are eligible to receive vaccines on the day * Monitor students for a minimum 15 minutes after vaccination * Respond to and manage adverse reactions following immunisation * Report adverse reactions following immunisation to vaccine(s) to [SAEFVIC](https://www.safevac.org.au/Home/Info/VIC) * Inform the school immunisation coordinator and parents/guardians of any incidents occurring during immunisation day * Follow up students who have missed vaccine(s) * Record and report immunisation encounters to the [Australian Immunisation Register](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/what-immunisation-history-statement) |

# **School**

The role of the school is to:

* appoint a school immunisation coordinator to liaise with the immunisation provider
* support the distribution and collection of all immunisation consent forms
* send student and parent/guardian contact details by email to your council immunisation provider as permitted by the [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019](http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_reg/phawr2019331/s112.html)
* utilise vaccine resources provided by the immunisation provider to communicate with students, parents/guardians, teachers, and the wider school community about adolescent immunisation
* ensure appropriate resources and environments are available for the program to run safely and effectively on vaccination day

**Table 3: Role of the school/school immunisation coordinator**

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| **Coordinate** | **Consent** | **Communicate** |
| * Sign secondary school vaccination program agreement with immunisation provider * Plan and facilitate vaccine days * Transfer student and parent/guardian contact details to immunisation provider * Ensure adequate school staff available to supervise students on vaccination day | * Distribute consent forms * Collect and collate into class groups returned consent forms for Immunisation provider * Ensure that the consent card the student presents on the day of vaccination to the immunisation provider is their own | * Liaise with immunisation provider * Communicate with parents/guardians * Promote immunisation day to students and staff * Use health promotion resources provided by immunisation provider and the Victorian Department of Health * Communicate to the immunisation provider any questions or concerns raised by parents/guardians, students, or staff |

# **Data transfer from schools to immunisation provider**

Schools are authorised under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019](http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_reg/phawr2019331/s112.html) to provide student and parent/guardian contact details (for students eligible for school-based vaccines) to the council immunisation provider. This assists councils to follow up any non-returned consent forms with parents/guardians directly. Updates and changes to contact details should be communicated to council throughout the year. For further information for parents/guardians please refer to the [Collection Statement](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) available on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>

Further information regarding Request for Information and instructions regarding the extraction of student and parent/guardian contact details is available from:

* [Resources for secondary schools -SSIP page](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>
* Department of Education and Training [School Policy – Immunisation](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/immunisation/policy) <<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/immunisation/policy>>.

# **Privacy obligations**

In managing the collection and transfer of student and parent/guardian contact details, consent form distribution and collection process, schools are required to comply with the [Information Privacy Act 2000](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/information-privacy-act-2000) and the [Health Records Act 2001](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/health-records-act-2001/046). This legislation prescribes the standards for the collection, handling, and disposal of personal and health information. Schools must ensure confidentiality by:

* ensuring records are secure, for example, by storing them in a locked filing cabinet
* preserving confidentiality when handling written or oral information
* conducting personal interviews in a private environment
* training staff in information-handling procedures
* monitoring access to databases and systems that contain personal and health information
* periodically reviewing appropriate access levels to databases and systems and data security arrangements.

Further information about [maintaining privacy of records](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/privacy-information-sharing/policy) is available from the Department of Education and Training School policy and advisory library.  
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/privacy-information-sharing/policy>

# **Steps for a successful immunisation program**

Refer to [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Eight): Eight tips for a successful school vaccine program

# **Step 1: Liaise with the immunisation provider**

Immunisation providers usually commence their school vaccine program planning cycle prior to the commencement of the school year. Your local Council will be in touch with your school between September and December; however, schools are encouraged to contact the immunisation provider at any time during the year.

# **Step 2: Confirm dates for school immunisation**

There will be a minimum of two immunisation visits scheduled each year. Under some circumstances your immunisation provider may negotiate additional days. It is important that your school adheres to the dates you’ve committed to in your agreement.

# **Step 3: Enter immunisation dates into the school calendar**

Marking dates in the school calendar ensures that all staff are aware of upcoming commitments. It is also important to book appropriate rooms and equipment for the days of vaccination. A checklist is provided in [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Vaccination) that steps through all the requirements for setting up a suitable vaccination area.

# **Step 4: Complete and sign agreement**

A [signed agreement](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) formalises the arrangements agreed to between schools and immunisation providers to deliver the secondary school immunisation program. Please ensure each section of the agreement is complete and accurate. The agreement can be found on the [Resources for secondary schools – SSIP](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) page on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>

# **Step 5: Provide school and student information**

Week 1 of the School Year, schools are required to distribute the [Collection Statement](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school> to all students in Year 7 and Year 10.

Record any objections from parents/guardians. Electronically transfer contact details for those students and parents/guardians who **have not** opted out to your council as soon as possible after the school census date - 28 February annually. If student data is confirmed prior to census date, 28th February, it can be sent to councils earlier to assist them prepare for the school-based immunisation sessions. Instructions about how to [extract the relevant information from your school system](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school), are located on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>.

# **Step 6: Receive consent forms and information packs**

Your immunisation provider will supply you with consent forms and printed immunisation resources.

Additional [immunisation resources](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) and information may be accessed on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>

# **Step 7: Distribute consent forms and information packs**

It is recommended that a coordinated approach is taken to distribute consent forms (for example, through homeroom classes). Students should be advised when completed consent forms need to be returned following distribution.

# **Step 8: Raise awareness about immunisation**

It is important to communicate vaccine day dates and times with parents and guardians, students, and school staff.

Providing positive messages and appropriate health information to students and parents /guardians (especially in their own language) will help them to understand the importance of immunisation and encourage students to be vaccinated. Translated immunisation resources are available on the Health Translations website <https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf>

A range of [educational resources](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) designed to raise awareness about immunisation for teachers, students and parents/guardians are available on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school> (see [Appendix D](#_Appendix_D:_Resources)).

# **Step 9: Collect and collate consent forms into class groups**

Students should return consent forms to school, signed by their parent/guardian. Both ‘YES’ and ‘NO’ forms must be collected. It is the school’s goal to collect 100 per cent of the consent forms. It is not the responsibility of the school to review or ensure consent forms are appropriately completed. Schools need to collate consent forms into year groups with student class lists to assist the immunisation provider to facilitate a smooth operation on vaccine administration day.

It is important to note that completed consent forms constitute a health record and schools must abide by legislative privacy requirements in relation to how this information is collected, used, disclosed, and stored. See the previous section: [*Roles and responsibilities – School*](#_Roles_and_responsibilities).

# **Step 10: Provide collated forms to immunisation provider**

The council immunisation provider will arrange for the collection of returned forms from the school. They will follow up consent forms (including those students who have not returned a form) directly with the students and parents/guardians using the contact details your school provided at the beginning of the year.

# **Step 11: Pre-plan vaccine days**

Ensure facilities and resources for the day are booked and organised (see [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Vaccination)). This includes room bookings, staffing, and the vaccine day timetable, which determines the order in which the students proceed to be vaccinated.

The vaccine day timetable is usually organised by class. This is best done with the participation of year-level coordinators and homeroom teachers, as they are aware of class sizes, timetables, and class commitments. The school is responsible for providing staff to supervise students pre and post vaccination. [Appendix C](#_Appendix_C:_Messages) provides tips on communicating with students and parents/guardians about immunisation.

# **Step 12: Facilitate vaccine days**

The school has a responsibility to facilitate vaccine days and ensure students are always supervised. It is the key responsibility of the council immunisation provider to ensure medical eligibility, administration of vaccines and appropriate care post vaccination. For more detail, please see the section entitled [*What to do on immunisation day*](#_What_to_do).

# **Step 13: Communicate with your immunisation provider**

It is important to notify your immunisation provider with any questions or concerns raised by parents/guardians, students, or staff;for example concerns about vaccine side effects.

Common side effects following the administration of vaccines are usually mild and temporary (generally occurring in the first few days after vaccination). Any event felt to be adverse or significant following immunisation, regardless of whether you think the symptoms were related to the vaccine or not should be reported to the Victorian vaccine safety surveillance service -[SAEFVIC](https://www.safevac.org.au/Home/Info/VIC).

If there have been any significant issues or incidents identified during the vaccine day or following the administration of the vaccine, these will need to be reported as required by the Department of Education and Training policy to the Incident Support and Operations Centre on 1800 126 126. For further information regarding [reporting and managing incidents](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/reporting-and-managing-school-incidents-including-emergencies/policy) see the Department of Education and Training policy and advisory library <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/reporting-and-managing-school-incidents-including-emergencies/policy>

# **Step 14: Continue to collect consent forms and update enrolment numbers**

It is important schools forward any consent forms that are returned to school throughout the year to council and communicate to councils any fluctuations in student enrolment numbers. This ensures that each eligible student has the opportunity to receive free vaccination to protect against vaccine preventable diseases.

# **Step 15: End-of-cycle review and planning for next year**

The school immunisation coordinator should take the opportunity at the end of the year to consider what went well, and what could be improved for the following year. The council will provide you with feedback about your consent form return rate and the percentage of students vaccinated.

# **What to do on immunisation day**

# **Preparation for vaccine day**

Equipment availability

Ensure tables, chairs and privacy screens are available in the allocated room for immunisation providers to set up as necessary. Please refer to the vaccination area checklist in [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Vaccination) to ensure you have all the equipment needed for set-up on vaccine day.

Meet and greet your immunisation provider

The immunisation provider team will arrive at the school at the agreed time and report to the front office or reception area. They will ensure that consent forms have been correctly completed and that the required number of pre-drawn vaccines is available.

The immunisation provider team will set up and prepare all the equipment before they start immunising.

# **Vaccination day process**

Designated school staff will escort eligible students to the vaccination waiting area according to the vaccine day timetable.

Student check-in

Consent forms are given to all students who have returned a signed form marked ‘YES’. The students then proceed to the vaccine area, where the Authorised Nurse Immuniser will complete a pre-vaccine checklist and ensure the student is eligible to receive the vaccine(s). If eligible, students will be administered the vaccine(s).

Students who have returned a consent form marked ‘NO’ must not attend vaccine area.

Vaccine record

The immunisation provider will ensure that each student receives a written record of the vaccines they received to take home.

## Monitoring students after vaccination

After receiving a vaccine(s), students **must** be seated for a minimum of 15 minutes in an adjacent area, within proximity to the immunisation provider team. Students must be supervised in this area by a First Aid trained school staff member. It is important that any student who appears pale, unwell, or distressed is immediately reported to the immunisation provider team for closer monitoring. Parents/guardians must be notified if there are any incidents or adverse reactions following immunisation. All adverse reactions following immunisation should be reported to the Victorian vaccine safety surveillance service -[SAEFVIC](https://www.safevac.org.au/Home/Info/VIC).

If there have been any significant issues such as adverse reactions or other critical incidents, these will need to be reported as required by the Department of Education and Training policy on [reporting school incidents](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/reporting-and-managing-school-incidents-including-emergencies/policy). <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/reporting-and-managing-school-incidents-including-emergencies/policy>

Departure of the immunisation provider team

It is the responsibility of the immunisation provider to remain at the school until all students have completed the minimum 15-minute waiting period and arrangements have been made for any student who is unwell following vaccination.

# **Some common issues**

Students who feel anxious or unwell

Anxious students should be encouraged to present first for vaccination to avoid waiting. Alert your immunisation provider of any student who is looking or reporting feeling anxious or unwell. If a student is unwell it is the responsibility of the immunisation provider to assess the student’s condition and determine their eligibility for vaccines.

If a student presents without a consent form

If a student presents for vaccination and wishes to receive vaccine, but has not previously returned a consent form, the immunisation provider may obtain verbal consent from the student’s parent or guardian via telephone. Immunisation providers implement different policies in relation to following up with students who have not returned a consent form prior to the day of vaccination. In some circumstances councils may accept mature minor consent on the day of vaccination. In the school setting this decision should be made in consultation with the school’s principal. For further information please see Department of Education and Training policy on [mature minor decision making](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mature-minors-and-decision-making/policy). <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mature-minors-and-decision-making/policy>

If a student attends but refuses to be immunised

The immunisation provider will make every effort to reason with and vaccinate eligible students without being forceful. If the student continues to refuse, a member of the immunisation provider team will contact the parent/guardian in one the following ways to discuss alternative options for vaccination:

* by phone with the student present
* following-up by phone, letter, or email to organise a catch-up vaccine appointment

Absent students

If a student is absent on the vaccine day, the school coordinator must return their completed consent form to the immunisation provider. It is the responsibility of the immunisation provider to follow up with the parent/guardian of students who are absent on vaccine day. The immunisation provider will contact the parent/guardian either by phone, letter, or email to offer a catch-up vaccine appointment.

End-of-cycle mop-up

To achieve maximum immunisation coverage, immunisation providers may offer ‘mop-up’ activities for those students who have not completed their recommended immunisation schedule. Your immunisation provider will inform the school immunisation coordinator of available ‘mop-up’ activities. This may include the scheduling of an additional vaccine day, the option for some students to receive catch-up vaccine with their peers in other classes or accessing a community immunisation session.

# **Appendix A: Eight tips for a successful school vaccine program**

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| ✔ | **Planning** | Start planning at the beginning of the annual vaccine program planning cycle. Mark planned vaccination dates in the school calendar. |
| ✔ | **Preparation** | Schedule your vaccine days and organise the vaccination area before the vaccine day. |
| ✔ | **Communication** | Give the students and parent/guardian as much information as you can – this will inform them of the importance of immunisation. |
| ✔ | **Cooperation** | Establish a good working relationship with the immunisation provider team and share information with them early in the year. |
| ✔ | **Teamwork** | School vaccination works best when the school immunisation coordinator is supported by other staff members including the principal, teachers, and other school staff. Each of these staff members has an important role to play. |
| ✔ | **Follow up** | The school should aim for a **100 per cent consent form return** and should put processes in place to achieve this. |
| ✔ | **Promotion** | Promote immunisation and encourage students and parents/guardians to return consent forms – this will result in higher vaccination coverage rates and improved health outcomes for young people. |
| ✔ | **8. Review** | Learn from each year to improve the school based immunisation program for the following year. |

# **Appendix B: Vaccination area checklist**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Does / will the vaccination area have:** | **Yes** | **No** | | A place for students to wait that is suitable for all weather conditions, and where they can’t see the vaccinations being delivered? | ☐ | ☐ | | Separate entry to and exit from the vaccination area? | ☐ | ☐ | | A ‘checkpoint’ table where the immunisation provider can record student’s attendance and check their consent card is valid? | ☐ | ☐ | | Mobile screens for students’ privacy? | ☐ | ☐ | | Availability of a separate space for the vaccination procedure that affords extra privacy to individual students being vaccinated if needed? | ☐ | ☐ | | A separate space for students to sit and be observed for a minimum 15 minutes post vaccination that is not immediately visible to the vaccination area? | ☐ | ☐ | | Gym mats for students to lie down on if they feel faint during or following vaccination? | ☐ | ☐ | | Enough school staff to supervise the students before vaccination and for a minimum of 15 minutes immediately following vaccination? | ☐ | ☐ | | Enough tables and chairs (for administration, the nurse immunisers and the students being vaccinated)? | ☐ | ☐ | | Integration aides accompanying students with special needs? | ☐ | ☐ | | Adequate lighting? | ☐ | ☐ | | Adequate heating / cooling? | ☐ | ☐ | | Hand washing facilities within easy reach? | ☐ | ☐ | | Power points? | ☐ | ☐ |  **The ideal vaccination area would be:**  * on the ground floor * away from stairs * in an area with mobile phone reception or within easy reach of a landline phone * spacious and free of clutter * quiet  If you have any concerns about the availability of items in this checklist, please discuss them with your immunisation provider. |

# **Appendix C: Messages for communicating with parents or guardians and students**

# **Messages for communicating with parents or guardians**

Immunisation is one of the most significant public health interventions in our community. To ensure your child receives the best protection from vaccine preventable diseases make sure your child is up to date with their vaccines provided by the [National Immunisation Program](https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/national-immunisation-program-schedule).

* All consent forms must be returned. You need to either consent to your child receiving the vaccination by marking ‘YES’ on the consent form or refuse by marking ‘NO’ on the consent form.
* The consent form must be returned by [provide a specific date].
* On vaccine day your child should wear loose and comfortable clothing, for example, their sports uniform (if this appropriate and permitted by your school).
* Let the school know as soon as possible if your child is going to be absent on vaccine day.
* Parents/guardians are not required to attend with their children on vaccine day.
* If your child misses a vaccine day for any reason, please contact the immunisation provider to organise a catch-up vaccination [provide a telephone number].
* If you have any questions or concerns you should ring the school immunisation coordinator [provide telephone number] or your immunisation provider [provide telephone number].

# **Messages for communicating with students**

* Yes, needles hurt – but only for a second! The benefits far outweigh a little discomfort.
* Make sure you eat breakfast on vaccine day morning.
* Bring an extra snack and drink with you on vaccine day to avoid feeling faint or dehydrated.
* Wear loose and comfortable clothing on vaccine day, for example, your sports uniform (if this appropriate and permitted by your school).
* Leave books and bags in the classroom.
* Bring a buddy if you need support.
* If you are feeling anxious, let us know – you can go in first and get it over and done with.

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# **Appendix D: Resources**

# **Where to find out more about the secondary school immunisation program**

Secondary School Immunisation program

Information including resources is available on the [Secondary school vaccination program for adolescents](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) page on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>

Translated Resources

Translated information for the school vaccine program can be accessed on the [Health Translations](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/PresentEnglishResourceAll?Open&x=&s=Immunisation) website.

<https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au>

Your local Immunisation provider

Your council can help you to access up-to-date information about immunisation. Contact your Council or visit Council’s website.

**Australian Immunisation Register**

Information on how to obtain an Immunisation History Statement can be accessed on the [Services Australia](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/what-immunisation-history-statement) website

< <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register>>

Department of Education and Training

Victoria’s Department of Education and Training policy in relation to school-age children and immunisation is available under Immunisation in the [policy and advisory library](file:///C:/Users/kbry0810/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/ZPKKLPPP/policy%20and%20advisory%20library) <<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/immunisation/policy>>

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This document is available on the internet (please visit [Secondary school vaccination program for adolescents](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school) page on the Health.vic website <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-adolescents/secondary-school>

The Department of Health Immunisation Unit has since revised and updated the *Secondary school immunisation: a guide for schools* in October 2021.

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