

Dear Parents/Guardians of incoming 7th graders,

This letter is a reminder that your student will need a few required immunizations **before** school starts on **8/24/2026**. The Iowa Department of Health made changes to the Iowa Immunization law at the start of the 2017/18 school year. **This change requires that all students entering 7th grade born on or after September 15, 2004 shall have one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine before school starts this fall.** There is **no** provisional period to implement this requirement.

Meningococcal disease is a life-threatening illness that is caused by a bacteria that causes infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) and bloodstream infections (bacteremia or septicemia). These bacteria spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions like spit (e.g. by living in close quarters, kissing). **The vaccine is required prior to both the 7th and 12th grades unless a Certificate of Immunization of Exemption (medical or religious) is presented by the first day of school.**

Also, beginning the 2013/2014 school year and thereafter, students entering 7th grade and above if born on or after September 15, 2000, shall have a one-time dose of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine regardless of the interval since the last Tetanus/Diphtheria containing vaccine. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious disease that causes violent coughing fits that often make it hard to breathe.

All students entering 7th grade must have proof of having both the Meningococcal and the Tdap vaccines **before school starts in August**, unless the student has a **Certificate of Immunization of Exemption (medical or religious)**, which will need to be presented **before** school starts in August as well. **If these required vaccines are not on file with the school by the first day of school, your student will be unable to attend school until they are completed.**

If your student has already received these vaccines, please ask your clinic to forward (mail, fax, or email) their immunization certificate to the school or myself at: michelle.berentsen@riceville.k12.ia.us.

Students who plan on participating in athletics must have a current sports physical on file with the school to be able to practice/play. Also, students who plan on participating in athletics must also have a current concussion screening (IMPACT testing) on file. These are free and are available to do online now. You can reach out to **MCRHC-Osage physical therapy for instructions on how to complete the testing at 641-732-6100.**

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your help with these requirements. ~ Mrs. Berentsen, RN

