

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SCHOOL HEALTH AND  
THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMS**

<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH SERVICES</b>	
<b>1. <i>What is the definition of individualized health services in schools?</i></b>	Individual health services are services provided to individual students who attend school within the community which are specific to the health needs of the individual student, such as medication administration.
<b>2. <i>What are the qualifications for nurses providing individualized health services at non-public schools?</i></b>	Non-public schools are required to employ at minimum, a <u>registered nurse licensed in RI with “substantially equivalent qualifications”</u> to provide individualized health services. (Sections 8.3.2 and 8.3.3)
<b>3. <i>What is the definition of population-based health services in schools?</i></b>	Population-based services are services provided to all students attending school within the community which are not focused on the individual health needs of the particular student but are provided to all students as part of the health screenings, record keeping, required immunization compliance, and reporting requirements.
<b>4. <i>Who can provide population-based services at public and non-public schools?</i></b>	Only a certified school nurse teacher can provide population-based services at public <b>and/or</b> non-public schools.
<b>5. <i>When a Certified School Nurse Teacher (CSNT) covers a non-public school (private, parochial), for population based services, is the CSNT responsible for writing the Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) or the Emergency Health Care Plan (EHCP) for students in the non-public school?</i></b>	No. Writing the IHCP/EHCP is the responsibility of the school nurse (in collaboration with medical provider, parent etc.) employed by the non-public school to provide individualized health services (Section 7.3.4)
<b>SCHOOL PERSONNEL</b>	
<b>6. <i>Are non-public schools required to employ certified school nurse teachers to provide individualized health services?</i></b>	No. In accordance with the <a href="#">Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs</a> non-public, non- public schools are exempt from the certified nurse-teacher requirement. Non-public schools are authorized to employ registered nurses licensed in Rhode Island for the purpose of providing individualized health services, including dispensing medications, to students in the school setting.
<b>MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION</b>	
<b>7. <i>How did the definition of “Medication” change in the <a href="#">Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs</a> after July 2014?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before July 2014: <b>Medication</b> means a <u>prescription substance</u> regarded as effective for the use for which it is designed in bringing about the recovery, maintenance or restoration of health, or the normal functioning of the body.</li> <li>• As of July 2014: <b>Medication</b> means any FDA-approved <u>substance</u> regarded as effective for the use for which it is designed in bringing about the recovery, maintenance or restoration of health, or the normal functioning of the body.</li> </ul>
<b>8. <i>Given the new definition for medication, are cough drops considered a medication?</i></b>	Yes. Cough drops are classified as an FDA approved substance: <a href="http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse">http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse</a> and should not be given to a student without a written order from a licensed health care prescriber except as provided in Section 20.10.1 of the regulations related to self carry/self administration of OTC (over-the-counter) medication.
<b>9. <i>Do all medications administered in public and non-public schools need a written order from a licensed health care prescriber?</i></b>	Yes. In accordance with the <a href="#">Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs</a> , all medications, including prescription and OTC, shall be administered only in accordance with a written order from a licensed health care prescriber, <u>except</u> as provided in Sections 18.10 (epinephrine), 19.4 (glucagon), 20.10.1 (self carry /self administration of OTC), 20.14 (inhalers), or 20.15 (OTC medication administration <u>at off site activities</u> ).
<b>10. <i>The EHCP protocol for anaphylaxis at my school often includes an order to administer Benadryl and epinephrine. If a student should have an anaphylactic reaction in the absence of a school nurse at school or at an off-site school related activity, should school personnel trained to administer an epi-pen also be instructed to give the Benadryl-- if Benadryl is part of the students’ EHCP?</i></b>	No. In accordance with the <a href="#">Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs</a> Section 20.4, no lay person, other than a parent, should administer medication (including Benadryl) to a student in the school setting. The only exceptions

to this rule are the administration of epinephrine and glucagon as outlined in Sections 18.10 and 19.4 of the regulations.

## FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

### 11. *Where can I find the requirements for managing food allergies in schools?*

The requirements for managing food allergies are listed in Section 18 (18.11-page 34) of the [Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs](#).

### 12. *Where can I find resources related to managing food allergies in schools?*

- [Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis: A NASN Tool Kit](#)
- [CDC: Food Allergy Publications and Resources](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics Clinical Report: Managing Food Allergies in Schools](#)

## DENTAL HEALTH SCREENING

### 13. *What are the requirements for dental screenings in schools?*

The [Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs](#) pertaining to dental health screening, require that every student attending public and non-public schools must receive an annual dental screening through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade and be screened at least once between the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) and tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) grade. Schools are required to report to RI Department of Health (RIDOH) annually, aggregate screening results on grades **K, 3, and 6 (if 6<sup>th</sup> grade is screened)**.

### 14. *Is there a required form I should use for the dental screenings conducted at school?*

Yes. The [Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs](#) now require that schools use a standardized [dental screening form](#) and report aggregate data to RIDOH.

### 15. *How do I report dental screening data to HEALTH?*

An online data submission tool that is consistent with the [dental screening form](#) will be available on RIDOH website. <http://www.health.state.ri.us/teeth/for/schools/>

### 16. *Should I report on all the students who are screened at my school?*

No. Schools are required to report only on students in grades K, 3, and 6 (if 6<sup>th</sup> grade is screened) who are screened at your school.

### 17. *Do I need to report dental screenings on kids who are screened by private dentists and not at school?*

No. Students who are screened by private dentists/dental hygienists and who provide written documentation (**documentation from parent is acceptable**) are exempt and may elect not to be screened at school.

### 18. *Is there a required form my school should use to document student exemption from dental screening?*

No. Schools can develop their own form or choose to use the [Yellow Card](#) located on the [thrive website](#).

### 19. *I am a CSNT in an elementary school that only has students in grades 4 and 5. Since I am not required to report dental screenings on these students to the RIDOH, can I use my school's existing dental screening form?*

No. Even though your school has only Grades 4-5 and the dental screening result reporting is not applicable for your school, the new [dental screening form](#) should be used at all schools in RI. The new form lists more specific reasons for dental referral (refer to column on right) based on the screening.

### 20. *Does the new dental screening form replace the GREEN dental card?*

Yes. The dental screening form has replaced the GREEN dental card which is no longer available.

### 21. *What form do I use to notify the student's parent if a dental referral is needed?*

Forward a copy of the completed [dental screening form](#) to notify parents/guardians of students screened at school who are identified with a dental problem needing professional dental care.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION, CONTROL AND REPORTING

### 22. *Who do I call at RIDOH if I have questions about infectious diseases in schools?*

RIDOH [Division of Infectious Disease & Epidemiology](#) at (401) 222-2577.

### 23. *Where can I find a list of the diseases that are reportable to the Department of Health?*

[Reportable Diseases and Conditions](#) are listed on RIDOH website and in the [Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Reporting of Communicable, Environmental and Occupational Diseases](#).

### 24. *Where do I call with questions about tuberculosis (TB) or TB testing?*

RIDOH [Tuberculosis Program](#) at (401) 222-2577.

### 25. *We are in the process of reviewing our school's policies related to head lice and other infectious diseases. Where can I find resources from the Department of Health?*

- [Head Lice: Guiding Principles for School Policy](#)
- [The RI School Nurse Teacher Infectious Disease Manual](#)

## IMMUNIZATION

### 26. *Where do I find the immunization requirements for schools?*

Immunization requirements for schools are available in the [Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Immunization and Communicable Disease Testing in Preschool, School, Colleges or Universities](#).

### 27. *Where do I call if I have questions about immunization requirements?*

Contact Kathy Marceau at [Kathy.marceau@health.ri.gov](mailto:Kathy.marceau@health.ri.gov)

### 28. *Are there exemptions to school immunization requirements?*

Yes. Rhode Island [regulation](#) allows for exemption from immunization requirements for documented temporary, medical, or religious reasons. Exemption forms must be [ordered](#) by school medical staff from HEALTH's distribution center at no cost. <http://health.ri.gov/order/publications/> (click on Immunization).

### 29. *I have a new student who is in DCYF custody coming into my school. The student has an incomplete immunization record. Should I let them into school?*

Yes. The [Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Immunization and Communicable Disease Testing in Preschool, School, Colleges or Universities](#), state that a student who is under the care of the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) at initial preschool or school entry, shall be enrolled in school upon presentation of a completed intra-state education identification card in accordance with the requirements of RI GL §42-72.4-1 or as stipulated in §3.4.1(f) of the Regulations. The SNT should then work with DCYF to ensure that the student completes all required immunizations.

### 30. *What is the purpose of the Immunization Status report, and when do I report the information to the RIDOH?*

The **Immunization Status Report** for kindergarten and 7th Grade is an annual web-based survey that allows HEALTH to monitor the immunization status of school-age children statewide, and to prevent and control infectious disease outbreaks in school settings. The survey is due in November of each school year. In September of each year, RIDOH sends a reminder with survey instructions through the school nurse teacher list serve. The results of the statewide survey are reported back to school nurses, principals, superintendents, and school committees and posted on RIDOH website.

### 31. *What should school nurses do with the immunization exemption form?*

After the original immunization exemption affidavit form is signed it should be part of the student record and does not have to be returned to the RIDOH.

### 32. *How long is each child's individual exemption valid?*

Each district and non-public school would determine how often an exemption form should be updated.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 33. *Where can I find student health and dental cards for my school?*

Electronic versions of the student health and dental (Yellow Card) cards are available for schools to [print](#) on the [thrive website](#).

### 34. *Where can I find information about school nutrition standards?*

Go to the RIDE website at: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/cnp/NutritionPrograms/HealthySnacksBeverages.aspx>