



REPORT TO

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND
WELL BEING, CATHOLIC
EDUCATION AND HUMAN
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

STUDENT CONSENT FOR IMMUNIZATION

There is no wealth better than health of body, and no gladness above joy of heart.

Sirach 30:16

Created, Draft

September 23, 2019

First Tabling

October 2, 2019

Review

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

Lori DiMarco, Superintendent, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation; Academic ICT

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

D. Koenig
Associate Director
of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha
Associate Director of Facilities,
Business and Community
Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends that the Board agree to allow secondary school students to provide their own consent for immunizations provided in school. The report outlines the rationale for this change.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 8 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. The Toronto Catholic District School Board works collaboratively with Toronto Public Health. Toronto Public Health has requested that we consider this request to allow students to consent to immunizations in TCDSB secondary schools.

C. BACKGROUND

1. The following points are from a letter written by Dr. Vinita Dubey, Associate Medical Officer of Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program, Toronto Public Health:
 - A. The law in Ontario is that mature minors can consent for health interventions. A student can go to a doctor or to a Toronto Public Health community clinic and get the vaccine without parental consent. To have different criteria in schools would be inconsistent and inadvisable.
 - B. There is no legal age of consent for medical care in Ontario's Health Care Consent Act.
 - C. The Information Privacy Commissioner in Ontario is against preventing mature minors from being able to consent on their own, when they can provide their own informed consent.
 - D. When secondary students can consent for their own vaccinations, it will allow Toronto Public Health (TPH) to host vaccination clinics in schools to prevent suspensions under the Immunization of School Pupils Act. This includes vaccines such as meningococcal and pertussis. These are routine vaccines in Ontario.
 - E. Neighbouring school boards and public health units, including Peel, Durham, York and Toronto regions, allow secondary school students to sign their own consent.
 - F. These vaccines are life-saving. They are safe and they work.

- G. In the 2018-19 academic year, TPH staff assessed all 322,375 elementary and secondary students in 806 public schools in Toronto (4 main school boards in Toronto). Initially, 32% of the students (104,472) were not up-to-date with the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) and received a first letter from TPH. As of June 4, 2019, 14% of students (44,820) have received a suspension order, resulting in 21,077 (6.5%) active suspensions. TPH works with schools to assist principals to get their students' immunization records up to date. With this change in policy TPH could provide vaccines on site at secondary schools and prevent school suspensions.
- H. Maintaining high immunization coverage is essential to prevent and control communicable and infectious diseases. Ensuring students are enabled to get vaccinations when needed, with informed consent, is crucial to maintaining these high coverage rates, keeping schools healthy, and keeping students in school.
- I. While TPH agrees that parental involvement is important, and something they do not want to exclude, legally there is no merit for parental consent for a mature minor.

D. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. TCDSB would distribute a communication from TPH with parents of secondary students informing them that TPH will notify them of any upcoming clinics at TCDSB schools to make sure they are included in the decision making process and will have time to discuss the issues with their son/daughter before the clinic. Appendix A shows the contents of the draft letter.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That TCDSB work with Toronto Public Health to permit students of secondary schools to sign their own consent forms for immunizations offered in TCDSB schools.
2. That the communication in Appendix A be shared with all parents of TCDSB secondary schools.