

Informed consent by secondary students at school vaccination clinics

August 2019

As announced at the June TDSB Board Meeting, Toronto Public Health has made a change in vaccination policy, effective in the 2019-20 school year.

Students 14 years of age and older will be able to provide informed consent to receive vaccinations at Toronto Public Health clinics hosted in secondary schools. There are specific reasons for this change:

- For timely vaccination when responding to an outbreak. Outbreaks of measles are occurring in North America. High vaccination rates will prevent and control outbreaks.
- To align with current practice in TPH community vaccination clinics where secondary students currently consent to vaccinations in these clinics.
- To reduce student suspensions. In the 2017/18 school year 4,500 TDSB secondary students were suspended from school because they did not have up-to-date vaccinations. Allowing students to more easily access vaccines required for school attendance will reduce this number of suspensions.
- To support families who do not have a primary care provider or who may not have health insurance.

Parents will be notified in advance of any upcoming clinics at your child's school to ensure you are included in the decision making process. You will have time to discuss the issues with your child and health care provider before the clinic.

Toronto Public Health nurses will obtain informed consent from each student before vaccinating. This includes:

- Asking students if they have discussed the vaccination with their parent. Students are encouraged to discuss the vaccine with their parent, including while at the clinic.
- If they understand the benefits and risks of the vaccine they are about to receive
- If they have any questions
- Students will never be forced into vaccination

The goal is to improve the health of students at school. This change is consistent with practice already in place in other GTA school boards, and the [Health Care Consent Act](#). In Ontario, there is no legal age of consent in Ontario.

Please contact Toronto Public Health at 416-392-1250 if you have any questions.