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To: Maine School Administrators/Nurses  
From: Maine Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services  
Subject: NEW Maine School Immunization Requirements  
Date: January 30, 2017

On December 20th, 2016 the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education revised the Maine School Immunization Requirements rule. The changes further align Maine's immunization rules with current national recommendations to better protect the health of all Maine people. The following two changes were made:

1. Effective immediately, the exclusion period for varicella disease (chicken pox) has increased from 16 days to 21 days. This means that if a case of chicken pox is confirmed in your school and exclusions are recommended, any child who has not provided proof of immunization or history of disease will be unable to attend school or any school related activity for 21 days after symptom onset of the LAST case.
2. Effective for the 2017-2018 school year, all students entering, advancing, or transferring into seventh grade will need to receive one dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine before attendance is allowed. This requirement is for seventh grade students only; grades 8-12 are not included in this rule change.

You can find a link to the rule (Chapter 126 / 261) here:

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/rule/changes/index.html>

You can also read the communication from the Department of Education about this rule change here:

<https://mainedoews.net/2017/01/05/revisions-to-chapter-126-261-regulation/>

For your convenience, attached is a notification letter that your school may use to inform parents/guardians of the above changes to the immunization rule. Additionally, attached please find the Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

If you have any questions, please contact the Maine Immunization Program at (207) 287-3746 or (800) 867-4775 or by email at [ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov](mailto:ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov). You may also contact Jaci Holmes, Federal State Legislative Liaison for the Maine Department of Education at (207) 624-6669 or by email at [jaci.holmes@maine.gov](mailto:jaci.holmes@maine.gov).

Thank you.