A Note from the Health Office about Immunizations

I am writing this page to help simplify the immunization requirements for your understanding and to answer some commonly asked questions in regard to immunizations. As always, please call me at 614-864-5332, ext. 117, e-mail me at pgould@patriotprep.com, or stop by my office with any questions, concerns, or clarifications.

Ohio Department of Health recommends certain immunizations for all school-age children (see the form on our website). These immunizations are recommended for the safety of all students and staff and to help prevent the outbreak of communicable diseases, especially ones that can be prevented, in the community. However, parents/guardians do have the right to refuse immunizations as provided in the Ohio Revised Code 3313.671, parts 3 & 4. If you have questions regarding refusal, I ask that you get in touch with me rather than address all the details of refusal in this brief informative letter.

Ohio requires that immunization records be maintained for every school student. The purpose of our records is to know the immunization status of each student in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease. This allows the Department of Health and the school to work together for the safety of all students and staff to notify the proper people. The state allows 15 days from the start of school to be sure that all immunization records are current. To be considered “current,” the school needs one of the following: 1) a copy of the student’s immunization record, either on the letterhead of or signed by the health care provider; 2) the date of a scheduled appointment for immunizations that are due (you then have 1 business day to provide the updated record); or 3) a letter of refusal of immunizations (the form is available at the school website). I will make every effort to review every record for compliance as soon as possible. You will be notified in writing if any record is lacking and then have 2 weeks to meet one of the criteria above to remain “current.” Failure to meet the criteria for our records to be up-to-date will result in your student being asked to remain home from school until such time as the record is current. I will do everything possible to work with you to get our records up-to-date so that no school is missed.

There are occasions when a particular immunization “detail” is overlooked. A common one that I have observed is an MMR immunization prior to the 1st birthday. The guidelines state that our records must show 2 MMR immunizations with the 1st one no earlier than the 1st birthday. While your child may have had 2 MMR immunizations, the first one does not count (according to the guidelines) if given before the first birthday. In such a case, you can 1) make an appointment for a booster MMR, or 2) sign a refusal for the MMR booster. I would recommend talking to your health care provider. So far, in every case I have experienced, the health care provider has recommended a booster to be sure the child is fully protected. While an MMR immunization before the 1st birthday is not harmful, the baby’s immunity may not be able to obtain full protection at that early age. Again, please contact me with any questions.

As a final reminder, the immunizations are a **recommendation**; the records are a **requirement**! Help me to keep our records current so that we can be prepared should the need arise!

Thank you for your interest in providing the best environment for our children!