

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Vaccination Policy



**Date**           **1 February 2023**

**Review**       **1 February 2024**

### **Introduction:**

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways of preventing disease. Modern vaccines provide high levels of protection against an increasing number of diseases which, in some cases, can be fatal. Immunisation programs help halt the spread of highly infectious diseases and prevent millions of deaths each year worldwide.

Immunisation not only protects those people who have been vaccinated, it also protects those in our community who may be unable to receive vaccines themselves, by reducing the prevalence and spread of the disease.

While primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities, schools also have an important role to play, and a legal responsibility.

The Victorian immunisation schedule lists the vaccines that are provided free of charge. The schedule provides information including at what age the vaccine is recommended. These vaccines are provided under the National Immunisation Program and the Victorian funded program.

### **Aim:**

- To clearly identify the immunisation status of enrolling children;
- To provide information to parents and families about immunisation;
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and staff.

### **Childcare/kindergarten requirements (No Jab, No Play)**

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, in order to finalise an enrolment for childcare or kindergarten at Lauriston Girls' School:

- A current Immunisation History Statement (HIS) from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) must be provided to the early childhood service, and
- The statement must show that the child is up to date with all the vaccinations they are due/able to receive or
- The child is eligible to enroll under the grace period. The grace period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date that the child first attends the service.

An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service.

'Conscientious objection' to vaccination is not an exemption.

Once enrolled, parents/guardians are required to provide Lauriston Girls' School with evidence that their child continues to be up to date with immunisations. An updated Immunisation History Statement is to be provided to the school whenever a child receives a vaccination.

After enrolment, Lauriston Girls' School may request immunisation evidence from parents/guardians twice per year, with regulations specifying that an interval of no greater than seven months elapses before parents/guardians provide this.

### **Junior School immunisation requirements**

By law, a child must have an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register to enroll in Junior school, even if the certificate shows that the child has not received any vaccinations.

### **Senior School immunisation requirements**

In Victoria, adolescents are eligible for a range of free vaccinations, which are most often delivered by local councils who visit secondary schools to provide the required vaccines. Stonnington Council Immunisation Services provide the Secondary School Immunisation Program to Lauriston Girls' School in Years 7 and Year 10. Lauriston Girls' School Student and parent/guardian contact details can be shared by the school with the local council to assist in the delivery of the program.

Young people under 18 need parental consent for vaccination unless they are considered a 'mature minor'. In the school setting, this determination may be made by the school principal in accordance with the DET policy on Decision Making by Mature Minors

### **Immunisation History Statements**

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is a statement showing the vaccinations a child has received. An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only accepted document for proving a child's immunisation status, including that they are up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive, or have a medical condition that prevents them from being fully immunised for their age.

Evidence required to qualify to enroll under the Grace Period provision varies depending on the circumstances of the family. Families should discuss their individual circumstances with the Lauriston Girls' School Admission team.

The Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered a valid Immunisation History Statement. Previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer accepted.

Lauriston Girls' School keeps a copy of the Immunisation History Statement, on each student's so that, if there is a disease outbreak, unvaccinated children can be quickly identified and excluded from school until the risk of infection has passed. A copy is saved, and a summary of status is recorded in each student's electronic medical notes.

If the Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is not provided to the school, a child may be excluded from school during a disease outbreak because their immunization status is unknown. Homeopathic treatment is not a legally recognized form of immunisation.

### **Where to get an Immunisation History Statement**

Parents/guardians will be sent an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR when their child turns 5 years old, but a statement can be requested any time.

Parents/guardians are able to print an Immunisation History Statement for their child from their myGov account, or:

- Call the AIR on phone 1800 653 809
- Visit a Medicare or Centrelink office.

Children who were vaccinated overseas must have their vaccine records assessed and be offered catch-up vaccinations as required. Overseas vaccines are to be reported to the AIR promptly and accurately, via HPOS or by submitting the AIR Immunisation History Form. Families who do not hold a Medicare card must call the AIR to request an IHS. A Translating and Interpreting Service is available by calling 131 450, Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:45 pm.

### **Medical Exemption:**

Some children may be exempt from the requirement to be fully vaccinated on medical grounds. Examples of valid medical reasons that a child could not be fully vaccinated include:

- An anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of a particular vaccine;
- An anaphylactic reaction to any vaccine component;
- Has a disease which lowers immunity (such as leukaemia, cancer);
- Is having treatment which lowers immunity (such as chemotherapy).

Parents/guardians who think their child may require a medical exemption to one or more vaccines should consult their GP.

If a child has a valid medical reason they cannot be vaccinated, a GP needs to complete and sign a Medicare Immunisation Medical Exemption Form and send this to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Parents/guardians then need to obtain an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR that indicates the child is up-to-date with all the vaccines that they can have, and listed the vaccines that they cannot have due to a medical contraindication. This statement needs to be provided by the parent/carer to Lauriston Girls' School to confirm enrolment.

### **Staff Immunisations**

Lauriston Girls' School will follow any Australia Government Public Health Order regarding vaccinations for staff.

### **Relevant legislation:**

- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015