

 **STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12237

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

May 2007

Dear Superintendent/Principal/Nurse/Administrator:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify requirements for the retention of student immunization records. Recently it has become apparent that some schools do not maintain the original record from the physician detailing a child's vaccination history after that information has been transcribed to another document. Also, some schools that do retain an original record do not store it in a place where it is easily retrievable when requested for audit purposes.

A student's immunization record provides important information regarding their protection against vaccine preventable diseases and is used to determine if they meet the immunization requirements for school entry/attendance under New York State Public Health Law Section 2164. Therefore, a school should:

- retain the original copy of all immunization records, and evidence of medical and religious exemptions, for 6 years, or 3 years after the individual attains the age of 18, whichever is longer even if an electronic copy has been made;
- maintain a complete list of students who are susceptible to vaccine preventable disease(s) so that they may be readily identified in the event of an outbreak including students who 1) have not yet completed the required immunizations for entry/attendance (are in process), and 2) have a medical or religious exemption; and
- make such records available to the New York State Department of Health for those purposes described by Public Health Law, including the auditing of student immunization records.

If you have any questions please call either myself or Robin Tice at (518) 474-1944.

Sincerely,

David W. Gonzalez
Public Health Representative
Immunization Program