

HAMPDEN CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

Hampden Charter School of Science
20 Johnson Road Chicopee, MA 01022
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Dear HCSS Families,

September 14, 2023

Welcome to the 2023/2024 school year! I know this year is quite different than any other. I would like to assure you that we at HCSS are doing everything we can to keep all students and staff healthy. On that note, I need to inform you about some policy changes/guidance that the Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have made regarding physical exams and immunizations.

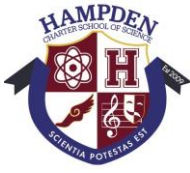
According to Massachusetts 105 CMR 200.100: Physical Examinations Required by Primary Care Provider of School Physician; An in-person physical exam is required for the following groups of students:

- **For students entering school for the first time**, an in-person physical exam should be conducted one year before or within 90 days of school starting.
- **A student transferring from another school** system shall be examined following the school entry recommendation for students entering school for the first time, listed above.
- **For students seeking to participate in athletics**, an in-person physical exam should be conducted **annually** prior to a student's participation in competitive athletics. Students who have not had this exam will be excluded from athletics.

The DPH encourages in-person physical examination of all students, when possible, to help detect physical and developmental anomalies. However, given that the current public health emergency has created delays and increased the use of telemedicine, the following applies to all other students regarding physical exams.

- A telemedicine well-child visit may be substituted for an in-person physical exam for the purposes of school attendance with the exceptions listed above.
- **For grades 4 and 10** the exam may be conducted within two years prior to school starting, or within 120 days of the start of school.
- **For grades 7** the exam should be conducted within one year prior to school starting and up to 120 days after the start of school.

According to Massachusetts 105 CMR 200.400: Immunization Requirements for Preschool, Elementary, and Secondary School Students; Immunization requirements should continue to be followed, including the **new requirement for flu vaccination for all K-12 students starting with the 2020-2021 school year**. Documentation of immunization status should be submitted to schools with **60 days** of school year start. Please keep in mind that the flu season is upon us. Flu shots are available at most medical offices and pharmacies. The earlier the flu vaccination is received during the flu season, the better.



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The school nurse will be contacting families during the first few weeks of school to let them know what, if anything, their child is missing for medical documentation. Please also know **that no medications, including over the counter medications (such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, cough drops, etc.) can be given in school without signed parent permission.** The over-the-counter medication authorization forms can be found on the HCSS website under “Parents”- “School Nurse”-“Parents/Legal Guardians”, or in the nurse’s office. Please submit the forms to the nurse as soon as possible.

Have a healthy and safe school year,

Kelly A Gemme, BSN, RN-BC
School Nurse, HCSS East