



## Vaccine Attendance Retention Plan

Districts and schools play a critical role in helping students stay up to date with their routine and recommended vaccinations.

All states have regulations that require schools, including private and independent schools, to verify that students have received certain vaccinations in order to enroll in and attend classes. Requirements vary from state to state; state health departments can help districts and schools find their state's requirements.

When a student misses 10% or more of school days for any reason – excused or unexcused – this is considered chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism may lead to difficulty learning to read by the third grade, achieving in middle school, and graduating from high school.<sup>1</sup>

This guide will help districts and schools establish a Vaccine Attendance Retention Plan using a continuum of support model to prevent absenteeism due to missed vaccinations.

A continuum of support model is a supportive approach to problem-solving using assessments and interventions. It enables schools to gather and analyze data to support planning and review progress to promote positive behaviors. This type of support is positive rather than punitive and creates a safe learning environment that enhances student outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

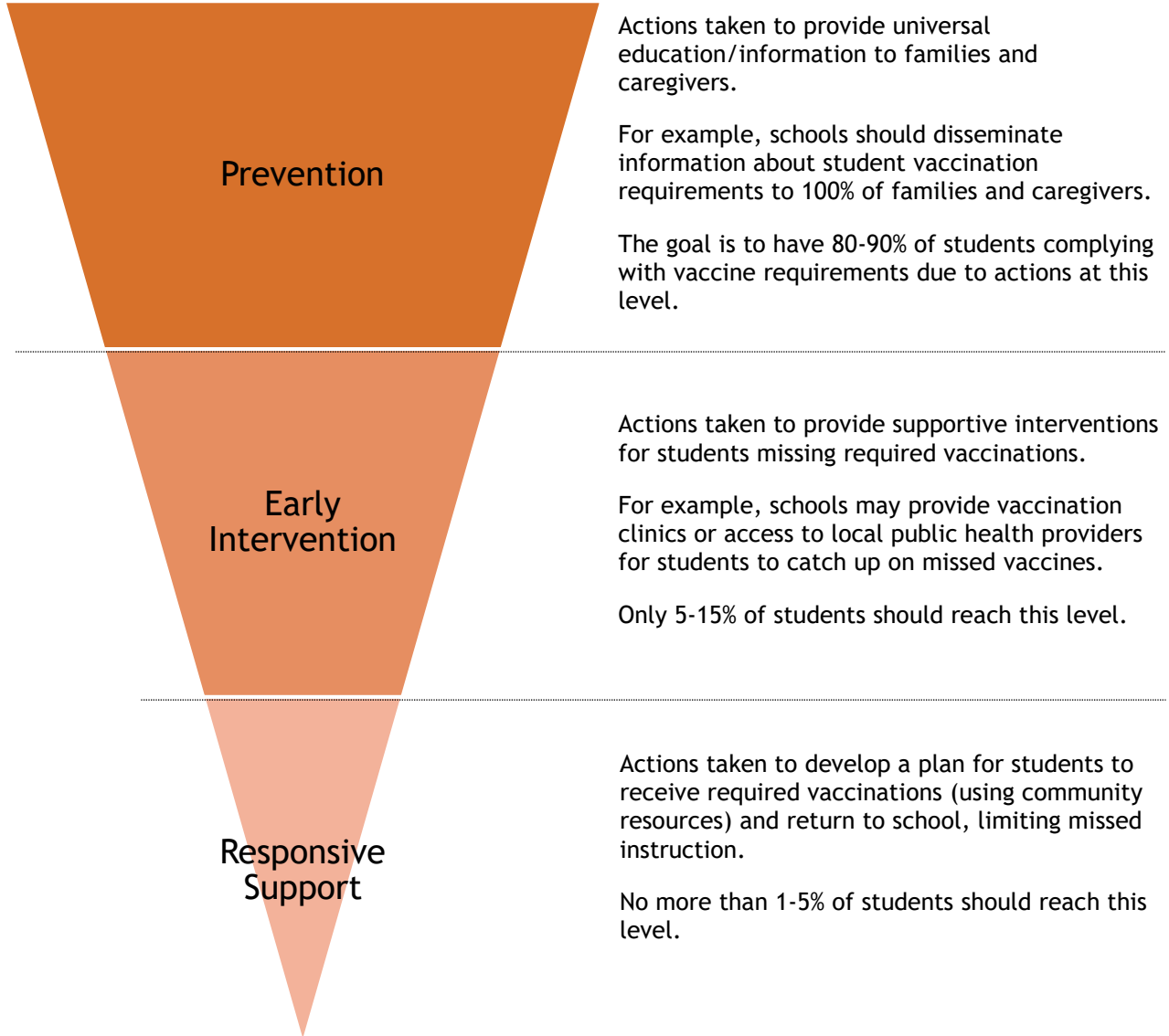
The continuum of support model has three phases: prevention, early intervention, and responsive support. Energy devoted to the prevention and early intervention phases can reduce the number of students moving into the responsive support phase, limiting the need to respond to higher-level situations that may result in student removal from the academic environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Chronic Absence, Attendance Works, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Supportive School Discipline: Snapshots from the Safe School Health Student Initiative, Education Development Center, Inc., 2012.

# Continuum of Support



# Implementing a Vaccine Attendance Retention Plan

This plan should be implemented prior to the new school year, over the summer, and within the first 30 days of the school year to align with state health department requirements.

Prevention	<b>Step 1: Build support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish or identify a school-level team that is responsible for developing and leading a Vaccine Attendance Retention Plan process that includes Steps 2-6.<p>Tip: Examples of team members include school attendance personnel, school nurses, local health department or clinic staff, school guidance counselors, community partners, family/caregiver advocates, and school administrators.</p></li><li>• Engage existing school-level teams, such as a local school wellness committee/team or school health advisory council (SHAC), that can support implementation of this plan.</li></ul>
	<b>Step 2: Assess existing barriers and collect resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify gaps, needs, and barriers related to obtaining vaccines, such as vaccine hesitancy, lack of transportation, limited appointment availability, or financial concerns.</li><li>• Collect information to address these needs and barriers.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Seek out resources from reputable sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Review these resources to ensure that the language is accessible and available in multiple languages based on the needs of the community.</li><li>○ Tip: Find resources to share with students and families/caregivers on Healthier Generation’s <a href="#">Vaccine Resource Hub</a>.</li><li>○ Consider contacting local public health providers, school-based health centers, local clinics/pharmacies, and healthcare providers to build a list of locations where students can receive vaccines.</li><li>○ Tip: You may want to partner with one of these organizations to host a no-cost school-based vaccine clinic.</li></ul></li></ul>
	<b>Step 3: Disseminate resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the state requirements for vaccine information dissemination and then create a communications plan to share the resources identified in Step 2.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Determine the best mode(s) of communication to ensure maximum and equitable reach to students and families/caregivers.</li><li>○ Tip: Use multiple methods to disseminate information such as social media, district/school website, newsletters, and flyers.</li><li>○ Identify communication leaders such as school administrators, parent/family groups PTO/PTA, within the school and community that can support dissemination of information quickly and efficiently.</li></ul></li><li>• Share information with school staff, students, and families/caregivers.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide translated materials as appropriate.</li> <li>○ Clearly note applicable deadlines.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Intervention</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4: Contact families and caregivers of unvaccinated students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage the school nurse to review state vaccination requirements and district/school attendance policies with families and caregivers. The school nurse can explain vaccinations, address family and caregiver concerns, and discuss potential student exclusion from school due to lack of compliance.</li> <li>● School-level team should identify any support needed or barriers that are preventing student from accessing vaccine services. Share resources to address these needs and barriers.</li> <li>● School-level team should share and discuss state timeline requirements and then develop plan for bringing students into compliance with vaccination requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Note: State requirements should include vaccine exemptions for personal or religious reasons. The school-level team should develop a plan to address student vaccination exemptions.</p> <p>Tip: These activities should take place in the spring prior to the new school year, over the summer months, or within the first 10 days of the school year to minimize missed instruction time.</p>
<p><b>Responsive Support</b></p>	<p><b>Step 5: Explain distance learning options for unvaccinated students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that students and families/caregivers understand distance learning options and expectations to prevent learning loss while students out of school.</li> </ul> <p>Tip: This should take place at least two-weeks prior to students’ removal from school to ensure they have the necessary equipment and materials to complete assignments from home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that the attendance office personnel code any missed days as unexcused absences due to student vaccination status.</li> <li>● Continue to communicate with families/caregivers to support compliance with vaccine requirements and facilitate a quick return to school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 6: Develop a reentry plan for students that have been excluded</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide clear instructions to families/caregivers for submitting updated vaccination records.</li> <li>● Inform teachers about students’ reentry periods and follow up to ensure that students have all make-up work completed.</li> <li>● Once the student reenters school, ensure that the attendance office personnel reclassify absent days to excused absences using the vaccination attendance code. If necessary, meet with school attendance personnel to ensure codes are entered correctly.</li> <li>● For students who do not obtain the necessary vaccines, continue to provide distance learning options and ongoing support in obtaining the required vaccines.</li> </ul>

# Considerations for Special Student Populations

## Unhoused students

- Never exclude unhoused students from school. (See [McKinney-Vento - National Center for Homeless Education](#))
- Provide alternative in-school options such as private offices or rooms separate from the general student population to avoid the spread of preventable diseases.

## Military students

- Allow 20 calendar days from the date of caregiver notification to provide vaccination certification.

## Students with disabilities

- Students with disabilities are not exempt from vaccination requirements and should receive the required vaccines.
- When discussing vaccination options with the families/caregivers of these students, provide extra consideration around vaccine barriers that may be faced.

## Foreign-born students

- Collaborate with families/caregivers to contact the local health department or immigration office for support in locating vaccination records.

## Transferring students

- Vaccination certification is the responsibility of the enrolling school. If a student transfers to a new school, the new school must contact the previous school to obtain immunization records or certification.

## Additional Resources

- [Considerations for Planning School-Located Vaccination Clinics | CDC](#)
- [School-Based Vaccines and Immunizations - School-Based Health Alliance \(sbh4all.org\)](#)
- [Vaccine Resources for Schools and Districts | Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#)
- [School Located Vaccine Clinics: The Next School Nursing Priority](#)