

POLICY
RI SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Guiding Principle and Purpose

Promote the health and well-being of students and employees through up-to-date education and science based information

Policy

In accordance with [RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-7](#), the RI School for the Deaf health program shall be approved by the state director of the Department of Health and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program shall provide for the organized direction and supervision of a healthful school environment, health education, and services. The program shall include and provide, within and consistent with existing school facilities, for the administration of such nursing care by certified nurse teachers, as defined in [RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-8](#), as shall be requested in writing by the attending physician of any student and authorized in writing by the parent or legal guardian of the student.

No instruction in the characteristics, symptoms, and the treatment of disease shall be given to any child whose parent or guardian shall present a written statement signed by them stating that the instructions should not be given the child because of religious beliefs.

In accordance with [RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-9](#) the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the Director, shall provide for the appointment of a physician to make examinations of the health of the RI School for the Deaf children. The physician shall report any deviation from the normal, and shall preserve the records of the examinations of the children.

The Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the Director, shall further provide for dental screenings by a dentist or licensed dental hygienist with at least three (3) years of clinical experience. The dentist or licensed dental hygienist shall report any suspected deviation from the normal and shall preserve of records of the screenings of the children. Dental screenings for children in kindergarten, third, and ninth grade shall only be performed by a licensed dentist. The Director or his/her designee shall notify the parents or guardians of children of conditions requiring professional or skilled treatment. Dental hygienists performing the dental screenings pursuant to the provisions of this section shall do so under the general supervision of the dentist liable and responsible under the contract with the community.

Except in emergency circumstances, referral by a dentist or dental hygienist of children screened pursuant to the provisions of this policy to a dental practice by which the dentist or dental hygienist is employed and/or which the dentist owns shall be strictly prohibited. In the event that a referral is made in violation of this provision, the school shall terminate its contract with the dentist and such conduct shall be reported to the Board of Dental Examiners.

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The school shall provide to parents or guardians of children who require professional or skilled treatment a list of both dental practices in RI that accept patients insured by Medical Assistance and/or RIte Care and dental practices that provide services on a sliding scale basis to uninsured individuals. The Director may obtain from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services a list containing the addresses and telephone numbers of both dental practices that accept patients insured by Medical Assistance and/or RIte Care and dental practices which provide services on a sliding scale basis to uninsured individuals.

In accordance with [RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-10](#) the school shall provide for the yearly screening or examination for scoliosis of all school children in grades six (6) through eight (8) and the preservation of records of the screening or examinations of those children. The parent or guardian of any such child may have the screening or examination conducted by a private physician and the results thereof shall be made available to the school department. Otherwise, a certified nurse-teacher shall conduct the screening. The screening of male and female pupils shall be conducted separately. The parent or guardian of any child who is found to have positive signs or symptoms of scoliosis shall be notified of the findings. However, the test shall not be required of any student whose parents or guardians objects on the ground that the test conflicts with their religious belief.

In accordance with [RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-14](#) the Director shall arrange for examinations of the hearing, speech, and vision of all children in the school, and the preservation of records of the examinations of the children and notification of the parent or guardian of any child where there is a deviation from the normal.

Beginning with the first year of enrollment, all school children in grades kindergarten through twelve (12) shall be given a hearing screening test by a properly trained audiometrist employed by the department of elementary and secondary education, at least once every three (3) years.

Pupils who failed the hearing screening test in previous years, children who repeat a grade, those with a history of hearing difficulty or pathology, and those suspected by school personnel of a hearing loss shall be screened as often as is necessary.

The hearing screening program shall be conducted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Tests shall not be required of any student whose parent or guardian objects on the ground that the tests conflict with their religious beliefs.

References

[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-7](#)

[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-8](#)

[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-9](#)

[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-10](#)

[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-14](#)

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[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-28](#)

[Rhode Island Department of Health, Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs \(2009\)](#)

[Commissioner's Decision: Woonsocket Teachers' Guild v. Woonsocket School Committee](#)

[Supreme Court Ruling: Woonsocket Teachers' Guild, Local 951, AFT v. Woonsocket School Committee](#)

Pediculosis (head lice)

In accordance with the recommendations of the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Director shall arrange for all RI School for the Deaf students to be screened for head lice at the start of every school year prior to the end of October. The school shall otherwise follow the Health Department Guidance on the detection and control of pediculosis.

Reference

[Rhode Island Department of Health - Head Lice - Principles That Should Guide School Policies](#)

Immunization and Testing for Communicable Diseases

In accordance with [RI Gen. Laws § 23-1-18 et seq.](#), and the [Rhode Island Department of Health, Rules and Regulations](#) pertaining thereto, the Director shall ensure that every student enrolled in the RI School for the Deaf is immunized in accordance with the current [Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians](#) against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, Haemophilus influenzae type b, hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox).

A student may be exempt from the immunization requirements only if (1) a physician, physician assistant, a certified registered nurse practitioner, or other licensed practitioner acting within his or her scope of practice signs a medical exemption stating that the student is exempt from a specific vaccine because of medical reasons, in accordance with Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations or American Academy of Pediatric guidelines, or (2) a parent or guardian objects on the grounds of religious belief and completes and signs the [Immunization Exemption Form](#), provided by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

Reference

[Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Immunization and Testing for Communicable Diseases](#)

[Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) and the American Academy of Family Physicians](#)

[Rhode Island Department of Health Temporary Immunization Exemption Form](#)

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[Rhode Island Department of Health Medical/Religious Immunization Exemption Form](#)

[Rhode Island Department of Health, Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs \(2009\)](#)

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