

# Immunization status of school children in Michigan, 2024

## Key points

- To protect children and their peers from outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases at school, Michigan students must receive a minimum of [six different immunizations](#), unless they receive a medical, religious or philosophical waiver.
- In 2014, Michigan added an education requirement to the waiver process. Following the education requirement, Michigan’s overall waiver rates dropped by more than a third (from 4.8% in 2014 to 3.1% in 2015). For the next five years, waiver rates fluctuated between 3-4%, but increased to 4.2% in 2021. In 2024, the waiver rates rose to 6.2%.
- In 2024, immunization waiver rates increased in all grades with reporting requirements:
  - Kindergarten: 6.8% compared to 6.4% in 2023
  - Seventh grade: 6.2% compared to 5.5% in 2023.
  - New entrants to a school district: 5.8% compared to 5.3% in 2023.
  - Overall (kindergarten, seventh grade, and new entrants combined): 6.2% compared to 5.7%
- This increase in waivers occurred amidst a decline in childhood immunization rates that began during the emergency phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, and has continued through recent years. As a result, cases and outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases such as measles and pertussis (whooping cough) have increased across the state in 2024 and 2025 ([County Immunization Report Cards](#)).

## History of immunization waivers in Michigan

Routine childhood immunizations offer safe and effective protection against 14 different serious, even life-threatening diseases. To prevent outbreaks in schools and other places where children congregate, a high percentage of children must be immunized. States meet this need through a variety of different school requirements.

Over time, Michigan has implemented laws and rules to ensure that children are adequately immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases:

- 1978: Each student, upon entry to kindergarten or a new school district involving grades 1-12, possess a certificate of immunization at registration or not later than the first day of school.
- 2000: *Public Act 89* mandated an immunization assessment for each sixth-grade student.
- 2010: Additional immunizations were added to the list of requirements.
- 2012: Senate Bills 237, 238, and 239 moved the sixth-grade assessment to seventh grade.
- 2014: New educational requirement for Michigan parents opting their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school

## Current immunization Requirements in Michigan Schools

Prior to a child entering or attending school, parents or guardians are required to produce documentation confirming that the child has received all doses of the [school-required immunizations](#), or has received at least one dose of each required immunization and is currently waiting to receive

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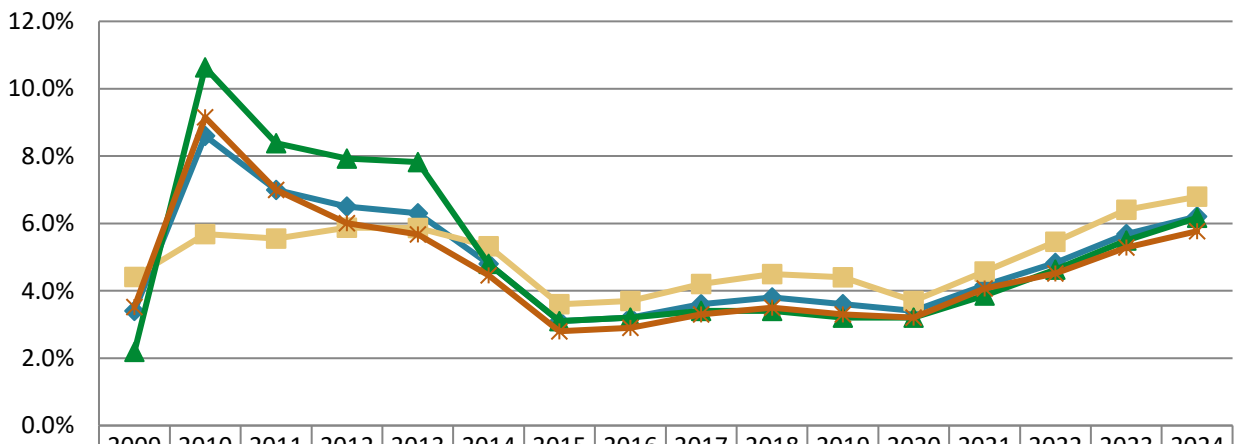
subsequent doses after the appropriate interval. (In the following tables these children are considered “complete.”) A required vaccine may be waived or delayed if:

- 1) A valid medical contraindication precludes the child from receiving the vaccine. A medical waiver must be completed and signed by the child's physician and shall state the contraindication(s), the vaccine(s) involved and the time-period the child is precluded from receiving the vaccine(s).
- 2) The parent or guardian holds religious or philosophical beliefs that preclude receipt of a vaccine(s). Any parent/guardian wishing to claim a nonmedical waiver must receive education on the benefits of vaccination and the risks of disease from a local health department (LHD) before obtaining the certified nonmedical waiver form from the LHD. An updated waiver must be presented each time the child's immunization status is reported.

## Michigan’s waiver rates over time

Each year, schools are required to report the immunization status of kindergarteners, seventh graders (sixth graders prior to 2012) and new entrants to the school district. The higher a school’s waiver rate, the fewer children have received all required vaccines. Michigan’s overall waiver rate has ranged from a high of 8.6% in 2010, when additional vaccine requirements were added, to a low of 3.1% in 2015, following implementation of the education requirement, (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Percentage of Children in Michigan Schools Waiving at Least One Vaccine, 2009 - 2024**

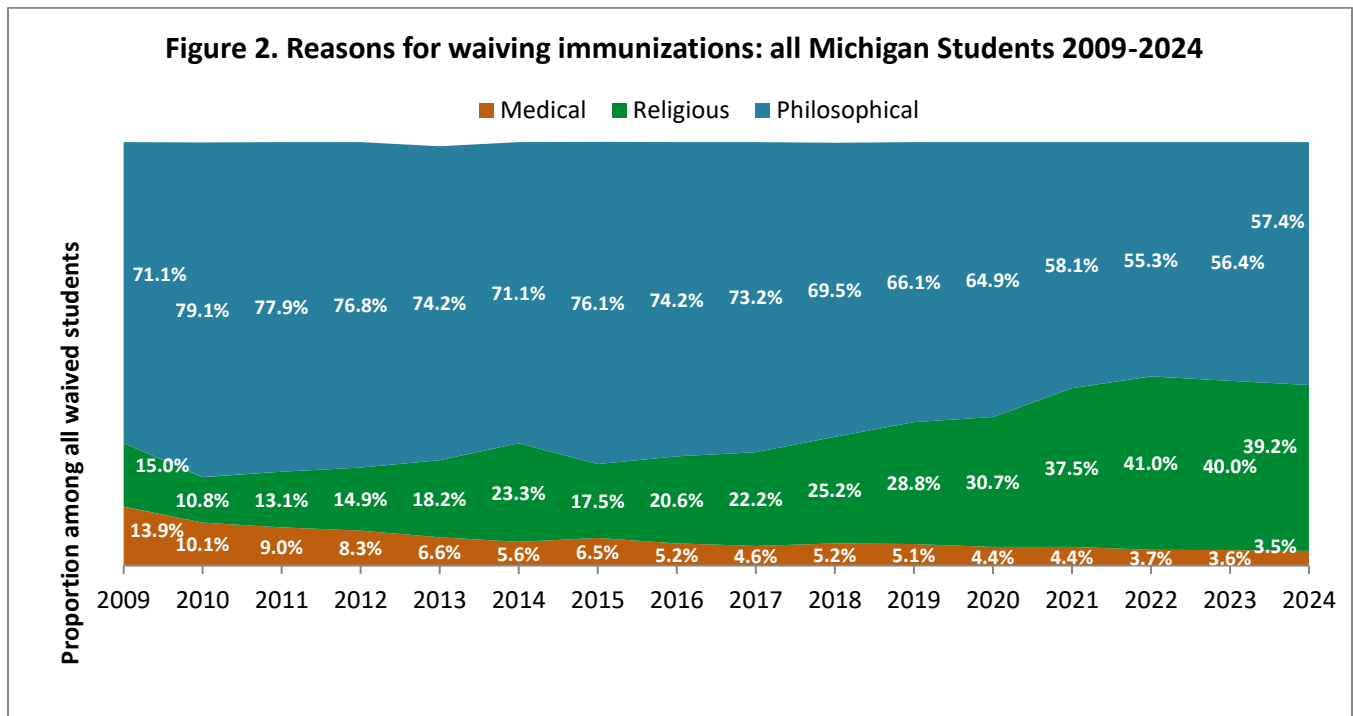


^Total is the combination of kindergarten, 6/7th grade, and new entrants to the school district.

\*\*In 2012 a Senate Bill was passed to move the sixth-grade assessment to seventh grade.

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In 2024, overall waiver rates rose to 6.2% which is the highest since 2013. As seen in Figure 2, most of these waivers are for nonmedical reasons. Philosophical waivers accounted for more than half (57.4%) of all waivers in 2024, and the share of religious waivers was about 39% of all waivers in 2024.



## Immunization Status at Public vs. Private Schools, 2024

In 2024, public schools had higher immunization completion rates (90.6%) compared to private schools (82.2%) and lower waiver rates (5.7% compared to 11.7%). This can be seen in Table 1, which compares how many children at public versus private schools were considered “complete” (i.e., completed all required immunizations or had received at least one dose of all required immunizations and were waiting to receive additional doses), as well as how many children had each type of waiver. Although, the waiver rates increased in both private and public schools since 2023, this increase was higher for private schools (11.7% in 2024 vs. 10.7% in 2023; 1% increase) as compared to public schools (5.7% in 2024 vs. 5.2% in 2023; 0.5% increase).

Table 2 further breaks down these numbers by grade level. Similar trends hold within each grade level, with public-school kindergarteners, seventh graders and new entrants all having higher completion rates and lower waiver rates than their private-school peers. (Note that the percentage complete plus percent waived does not always equal 100% because some students may still have incomplete/pending documentation at the time of reporting).

Even more granular data is available by school building on the [MDHHS website](#). (Note that schools with kindergarten/seventh/new enrollments < 5 are suppressed to protect privacy.)

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**Table 1. Immunization status of Michigan students at public vs. private schools, 2024**

	Public	Private	Total
<b>Number of reporting schools</b>	3,154	687	3,840
<b>Total students</b>	324,704	28,254	352,958
<b>No. students complete</b>	294,146	23,226	317,372
<b>% complete</b>	90.6%	82.2%	89.9%
<b>No. students with waiver</b>	18,575	3,317	21,892
<b>% waived</b>	5.7%	11.7%	6.2%
Medical waivers	614	143	757
% medical	3.3%	4.3%	3.5%
Religious waivers	7,216	1,363	8,579
% religious	38.8%	41.1%	39.2%
Philosophical waivers	10,745	1,811	12,556
% philosophical	57.8%	54.6%	57.4%

**Table 2. Immunization status of Michigan kindergarteners, seventh graders and new entrants at public vs. private schools, 2024**

	Kindergarten			Seventh Grade			New Entrants		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
<b>No. of schools</b>	1,633	521	2,153	1,128	498	1,626	3,126	634	3,759
<b>Total students</b>	97,375	10,159	107,534	99,247	7,621	106,868	128,082	10,474	138,556
<b>Complete</b>	87,909	8,291	96,200	90,037	6,150	96,187	116,200	8,785	124,985
<b>% Complete</b>	90.3%	81.6%	89.5%	90.7%	80.7%	90.0%	90.7%	83.9%	90.2%
<b>Waiver</b>	5,892	1,412	7,304	5,689	899	6,588	6,994	1,006	8,000
<b>% Waived</b>	6.1%	13.9%	6.8%	5.7%	11.8%	6.2%	5.5%	9.6%	5.8%
Medical	238	39	277	135	28	163	241	76	317
% med.	4.0%	2.8%	3.8%	2.4%	3.1%	2.5%	3.4%	7.6%	4.0%
Religious	2,229	616	2,845	2,013	344	2,357	2,974	403	3,377
% rel.	37.8%	43.6%	39.0%	35.4%	38.3%	35.8%	42.5%	40.1%	42.2%
Philosophical	3,425	757	4,182	3,541	527	4,068	3,779	527	4,306
% phil.	58.1%	53.6%	57.3%	62.2%	58.6%	61.7%	54.0%	52.4%	53.8%