



**FROM:** Communicable Disease Prevention Unit  
Population Health Division  
San Francisco Department of Public Health

**DATE:** October 23, 2014

**Please Read and Post**

## **Tuberculosis Screening Requirement at Preschool and K-12 School Entry Clarified for San Francisco Schools and Pediatric Providers**

The Tuberculosis Prevention and Control Program at the SF Department of Public Health has restated and clarified its policy regarding TB screening at Preschool and K-12 School entry.

A **medical provider's risk assessment for TB infection is the universal screening requirement** for entry into SF Preschools and K-12 schools, rather than universal TB testing with a skin or blood test.

- Only children identified by their medical provider as having one or more risk factors for TB infection would be required to have a TB skin or blood test prior to school entry. Children with no risk factors identified do not require TB testing.
- A signature by the child's health care provider attesting to "no risk factors for TB" should be sufficient for school entry for low-risk children.
- The TB screening assessment must occur within 1 year before first entry (i.e. first day of attendance) to school in San Francisco.
- The policy applies to both Preschool and K-12 school entry. Children who were screened in order to enter Preschool should also be screened for TB within 1 year prior to entering a K-12 school.

The full text of the policy, including a complete list of the risk factors for TB infection in children, and instructions to schools on how to complete the TB section of the School Immunization Record (Blue Card) is posted at: <http://www.sftbc.org/>

Recognizing that many schools have already completed their enrollment paperwork and many children have already completed a medical evaluation for the 2014-15 school entry, compliance with this restated and clarified policy is encouraged immediately, but not required until January 1, 2015.

For questions regarding K-12 school entry: SFDPH Immunization Program 415-554-2955

For questions regarding Preschool entry: SFDPH Maternal Child & Adolescent Health 415 575-5733

To contact the TB Control Program at SFDPH: 415-206-8524



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION UNIT  
Population Health Division, San Francisco Department of Public Health  
101 Grove Street, Room 204 | San Francisco CA 94102  
Tel: 415.554.2955 | Fax 415.554.2579 | [www.sfdcdp.org](http://www.sfdcdp.org)



Edwin M. Lee  
Mayor

**Policy for Tuberculosis Screening Requirement at Preschool and K-12 School Entry  
3 September 2014**

The Tuberculosis (TB) Prevention and Control Program in the Population Health Division of the San Francisco Dept. of Public Health strongly recommends a **medical provider's risk assessment for TB infection, as the universal screening requirement for school entry** in the City and County of San Francisco, rather than universal TB testing with a skin or blood test. Only children identified by their medical provider as having one or more risk factors for TB infection would be required to have a TB skin or blood test prior to school entry. Children with no risk factors identified do not require TB testing.

**The policy applies to both Preschool and K-12 school entry.** Children who were screened in order to enter Preschool should also be screened for TB within 1 year prior to entering a K-12 school in SF.

The purpose of assessing children for TB upon school entry is: (1) to identify opportunities for preventive treatment of TB infection; and (2) to detect active TB disease in children as early as possible to reduce transmission to others.

**Rationale for universal screening:**

TB testing in low risk children can have undesirable consequences. There can be increased and unnecessary costs to families, as many insurance plans do not cover the costs of TB tests in low risk children. National shortage of TB skin testing solution (as occurred in 2013) can lead to low risk children having limited options to complete the testing requirement, and delaying school entry. The alternate test, the TB blood test, can be costly. Testing of low risk children also results in more false positive results that prompt initiation of unnecessary evaluation and treatment.

The universal TB risk assessment policy has been adopted by the SF Unified School District (SFUSD) and is consistent with guidelines by the American Academy of Pediatrics, US Preventive Services Task Force, CA Health and Disability Program, CA Dept. of Public Health Tuberculosis Branch, and the California TB Controllers' Association. These guidelines take into consideration the higher rates of TB in CA and support the universal risk assessment as a safe and effective approach for TB screening in low risk children. For an example of universal TB risk assessment, see the SFUSD health assessment form at: [http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/enroll/files/2014-15/sf\\_school\\_health\\_form\\_03-05-14.pdf](http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/enroll/files/2014-15/sf_school_health_form_03-05-14.pdf)

**IN SUMMARY:**

***The Tuberculosis Prevention and Control Program strongly recommends that all Preschools and K-12 Schools in the City and County of San Francisco adopt a universal risk assessment policy for TB screening, requiring TB testing only in children with risk factors for TB infection.***

***TB screening is required for first entry both to Preschool and K-12 school in SF.***

***A signature by the child's health provider attesting to "no risk factors for TB" should be sufficient for school entry for low risk children.***

**Information for Health Care Providers – TB Risk Factors, Testing, and Referrals**

Risk factors for TB infection in children:

- Have a family member or contact with a history of confirmed or suspected TB
- Are in a foreign born family from a high prevalence country (Asia, Africa, Central and South America, Eastern Europe)
- Adopted from any high risk area
- Travel to countries with high rate of TB
- Live in out of home placements
- Have, or are suspected to have, HIV infection
- Live with an adult with HIV seropositivity
- Live with an adult who has been incarcerated in the last five years
- Live among, or are frequently exposed to, individuals who are homeless, migrant farm workers, users of street drugs, or residents of nursing homes
- Have abnormalities on chest x-ray suggestive of TB
- Have clinical evidence of TB

If the child has one or more risk factors for TB, the medical provider should perform a TB symptom review and administer a TB test (tuberculin skin test or interferon gamma release assay blood test / IGRA).

The TB symptom review consists of an assessment of:

- Cough > 3 weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Fever
- Weight loss or concerns about appropriate growth and development
- Night sweats

If the TB test is positive or a child has one or more symptoms suggesting active TB disease, a chest X-ray should be obtained. All San Francisco children suspected of having TB disease should be reported to the San Francisco TB Clinic at Ward 94, SF General Hospital (415-206-8524) for evaluation and clearance for school entry.

**Information for Schools – How to Complete the School Immunization Record (“Blue Card”)**

TB SKIN TESTS	Type*	Date given	Date read	mm indur	Impression	CHEST X-RAY (Necessary if skin test positive)
	<input type="checkbox"/> PPD-Mantoux	/ /	/ /		<input type="checkbox"/> Pos	Film date: ____ / ____ / ____ Impression: <input type="checkbox"/> normal <input type="checkbox"/> abnormal Person is free of communicable tuberculosis: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	/ /	/ /		<input type="checkbox"/> Neg	
	<input type="checkbox"/> PPD-Mantoux	/ /	/ /		<input type="checkbox"/> Pos	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	/ /	/ /		<input type="checkbox"/> Neg	

\*If required for school entry, must be Mantoux unless exception granted by local health department.

- Risk factor screening or TB testing must occur within 1 year before first entry (i.e. first day of attendance) to school in SF (both Preschool and K-12 school)
- Results of TB testing or Chest X-Ray should be indicated in the appropriate box
- For children whose medical provider attests to “no risk factors for TB”, the school should **write in** “No risk factors for TB” and the date of the medical provider’s attestation in or near the TB box on the Blue Card.
- For children who are tested with an interferon gamma release assay (QFT blood test or T-Spot blood test), the school should **write in** “TB blood test” the date, and the result (positive or negative) in or near the TB box on the Blue Card