



Office for Schools

To: School Pastors and Principals
From: Offices for Schools and Communications & Public Affairs
Re: Diocesan Policy on K-12 School Vaccine Mandate for Students
Date: November 1, 2021

As a diocese, our policies on COVID-19 safety remain governed by three basic principles:

- Adherence to Catholic moral teaching;
- Protecting the health of our students, faculty and staff; and
- Respect for the law.

State law currently requires that students in public, private and charter schools be vaccinated for measles, mumps, polio and seven other diseases in order to be enrolled in school. For those 10 required vaccinations, only medical exemptions are allowed. There are no religious nor personal belief exemptions for these 10.

The list of required vaccinations can be expanded by the Governor and State health authorities, but if the list is expanded without legislative approval, the law requires that any mandate include a medical exemption and a personal belief exemption.

The consensus among legislative analysts with whom we have spoken is that it is unlikely that the legislature will give legislative approval for a mandate without a personal belief exemption. Thus any parent would be able to seek a personal belief exemption for the Covid mandate.

In implementing any legal mandate for Covid vaccinations that includes a personal belief exemption, the Catholic schools of the Diocese of San Diego will accept any parents request for exemption as valid.

The question of Covid mandates divides our parent communities as it divides our societies. We hope that this course of action by the diocese balances the need to protect the health of our students, teachers and staffs with the rights of parents to decide issues vital to their children.