

New Immunization Requirements for 2016

Dear current and prospective Oak Grove parents,

As you may be aware, **Governor Brown signed into law a bill, SB 277, designed to require that California schoolchildren are fully vaccinated**, regardless of their parents' personal or religious beliefs. The bill applies to children enrolled in public or private day care, public school districts, and private schools. The law takes effect January 1, 2016 and its provisions will be implemented as of July 1, 2016.

SB 277 eliminates the religious and personal beliefs exemptions for vaccinations. Only students in a home-based private school and students enrolled in an independent study program who do not receive classroom-based instruction are exempt. It also provides a **limited exception** for children who, prior to January 1, 2016, submitted a **valid personal beliefs affidavit**. **Those students may continue attending public or private school until they enroll in the next "grade span"** (see question #2). A final category of exceptions is the medical exemption (see questions #13-17).

In accordance with this bill, **Oak Grove School cannot unconditionally admit any student, unless that student has been immunized for his or her age as required by SB 277, or if any of the exceptions described above apply.** Oak Grove needs to require documentary proof of each student's immunization status. We will need to record the immunizations of each student and are obliged to share this information with the health department. See question #3 for what specific vaccines are required at what age.

The following questions and answers refer you to the official and most up to date information provided by the State of California and will hopefully answer most of your questions. Should you still have further questions, please contact Lori Blackmon by phone at (805) 646-8236 or via email at loriblackmon@oakgroveschool.org.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:

1. **Where can I review the new law?**

The language of Senate Bill 277 is available at:

http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB277

2. **What is the definition of a "grade span?"**

"Grade span" is defined as (A) birth to preschool; (B) kindergarten (including transitional kindergarten) and grades 1 through 6; and (C) grades 7 through 12.

3. Which vaccines are required to enter child care or school in California?

Depending on the student's age, the diseases for which immunizations shall be documented include (1) Diphtheria, (2) Haemophilus influenzae type b, (3) Measles, (4) Mumps, (5) Pertussis (whooping cough), (6) Poliomyelitis, (7) Rubella, (8) Tetanus, (9) Hepatitis B, and (10) Varicella (chickenpox).

- a. For child care, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/child-care/>
- b. For kindergarten, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/k-12/>
- c. For 7th grade, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/7th-grade/>
- d. For students entering or transferring into California schools at other grade levels, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/k-12/>
- e. This document contains a helpful immunization schedule:
<http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-234.pdf>.

4. Do homeopathic vaccinations fulfill the vaccination requirements of SB 277?

No. According to SB 277 and the California Health and Safety Code immunizations are “subject to the condition that the immunization be performed in accordance with the regulations of the department.” In addition, SB 277 refers to the “immunizing agents that may be utilized,” as specified by the Department of Health and Human Services. Immunizing agents that are utilized need to have been approved by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Hence, homeopathic vaccinations do not qualify as immunizing agents.

PERSONAL BELIEF EXEMPTIONS ENDING

5. Will personal beliefs exemptions filed during or after 2016 be valid?

No. Starting January 1st, 2016 personal beliefs exemptions will no longer be an option for the vaccines that are currently required for entry into school or child care in California.

6. Will personal beliefs exemptions filed in California before 2016 remain valid in later years?

Personal beliefs exemptions filed at a school or child care facility before January 1, 2016 will remain valid until the student reaches the next immunization checkpoint or grade span:

- a. For a child in a child care facility, a previously-filed personal beliefs exemption will be valid until the start of kindergarten (including transitional kindergarten).
- b. For a student in 1st-6th grade, a previously-filed personal beliefs exemption will be valid until the start of 7th grade.
- c. For a student in 8th-12th grade, a previously-filed personal beliefs exemption will continue to be valid.

7. Is a personal beliefs exemption still valid if a student transfers between child care facilities or schools in California after 2015?

Yes, a personal beliefs exemption filed with a child care facility or school before January 1, 2016 is valid until the next immunization checkpoint or grade span (kindergarten or 7th grade).

Personal beliefs exemptions can be transferred between child care facilities and schools in California, both within and across school districts.

However, if personal beliefs exemption documentation from the prior child care facility or school is not available, students must meet immunization requirements (see question #3) or be enrolled in an independent study program with no classroom-based instruction or a home-based private school.

8. Is a personal beliefs exemption from another state or country valid if a student transfers to a California school?

No.

9. What will happen in future years when children with a prior personal beliefs exemption reach their next immunization checkpoint or grade span (kindergarten or 7th grade)?

Children with a valid personal beliefs exemption filed before 2016 will have to meet all age-appropriate immunization requirements for admission into K-12th grade (see www.shotsforschool.org/k-12/) or be enrolled in an independent study program with no classroom-based instruction or a home-based private school.

10. My child was admitted to Kindergarten in 2015 with a valid personal beliefs exemption to one or more of the required vaccines. How long may her exemption remain valid?

A personal beliefs exemption filed in 2015 at entry into Kindergarten may remain valid until the completion of 6th grade.

11. What if additional vaccines become required for child care or school?

Personal beliefs exemptions will be allowed for any new immunization requirement initiated by the California Department of Public Health.

12. What if a student with a valid personal beliefs affidavit on file enrolls at a new school? For example, what if an eighth-grade student started at a new high school in ninth grade?

An eighth grade student starting at a new high school in ninth grade would not be starting a new grade span and would still be covered by a valid personal beliefs affidavit, submitted prior to January 1st, 2016, through twelfth grade. However, students who transfer to or start at a new school at a time that coincides with a change in grade span must be fully immunized prior to the beginning of the school year. For example, a personal beliefs affidavit for a sixth grade student will no longer be valid when the student transfers to a school in the seventh grade and the student will need to be fully immunized prior to admission into the seventh grade.

MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS

13. What's required for a medical exemption to a required immunization?

A parent or guardian must submit a written statement from a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.), which states:

- a. That the physical condition or medical circumstances of the child are such that the required immunization(s) is/are not indicated
- b. Which vaccines are being exempted
- c. Whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary
- d. The expiration date, if the exemption is temporary

14. May other practitioners besides licensed physicians (M.D.s and D.O.s) provide a medical exemption to a required immunization?

No.

15. Is there a standardized form for medical exemptions?

No, but the documentation must include the elements described in question 13.

16. Are licensed physicians required to assist in requests for medical exemptions?

A licensed physician may provide a medical exemption but is not required to do so. Parents or guardians seeking medical exemptions should check with physicians in advance to clarify their policies on medical exemptions.

17. What if a child has not been vaccinated and the school believes he or she has been exposed to a disease covered by the vaccination laws?

A school may temporarily exclude the student from school until the local health officer is satisfied that the child is no longer at risk of developing or transmitting the disease.

CONDITIONAL ADMISSION

18. What is conditional admission?

In very limited circumstances, some children who have not yet received one or more required immunizations of a series may attend child care or school while they catch up on these immunizations. Children behind on their required immunizations may be admitted conditionally if they are not currently due for any doses or have a temporary medical exemption. The criteria are strict and specific. See <http://www.shotsforschool.org/laws/conditional-admission/> for further information.

Any student admitted conditionally to Oak Grove but who fails to obtain the required immunizations within the time limits allowed by the department and agreed upon with the school shall be prohibited from further attendance. The school will in such cases be unable to refund any tuition or fees and any outstanding amounts will still be due.