



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Every student enrolled in a Catholic school in the state of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. **A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment.** Pharmacy vaccination records may be accepted from any US pharmacy so long as the records are sent directly to the school from the pharmacy.

Conscientious Objections

Catholic schools do not accept students who have received a parental choice or religious exemption from the immunizations required by Texas state law. **Conscientious objections or waivers, which may be permissible for attendance in public schools, do not qualify as an exemption in Catholic Schools in Texas.** (Atty. Gen. Op. GA-0420)

Exemption

The only exemption to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the state of Texas.

Provisional Enrollment

All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. The law requires that students be fully vaccinated against the specified diseases. **A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule.** To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school.

- **A school nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination.** If at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the school shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

Pontifical Academy for Life Statement

The Pontifical Academy for Life rejects the claim that Catholics have a moral duty to refuse the rubella vaccine on the grounds of conscience and Catholic teaching. It encourages Catholic parents to vaccinate their children against rubella and other serious diseases despite the unfortunate origin of the cell lines used in the manufacture of vaccines. Therefore, immunizations are not in conflict with the Catholic faith. [The Pontifical Academy for Life, "Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Foetuses", 2005: +DEF].

This immunization policy was approved by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission and endorsed by the Bishops of Texas in January 2009 and reaffirmed by the Bishops of Texas in April 2017, 2021, and 2023 with no changes.