

Clinician's Guide to Exemptions for Minimum Immunization Requirements

for Children Enrolling or Entering a Child Care Facility or School in the State of Illinois

Illinois law allows for **medical** and **religious** exemptions to school immunization requirements¹. This handout outlines recommendations for clinicians as they work with families to meet Illinois' minimum immunization requirements and create safe and healthy school environments.

✓ For Medical Exemptions*

- Understand bona fide reasons for granting medical exemptions, as detailed in the American Academy of Pediatrics' Red Book.^{2,3}
- Only grant exemptions when medically justified and recertify the need for these exemptions on a regular basis.

Medical exemption letters should clearly state the nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances that contraindicate specific immunizations. The letter must identify each vaccine that may be detrimental to the student's health.

Note: Medical Exemptions should be signed by the same clinician responsible for performing the health examination.

✓ Certificate of Religious Exemption Forms

Before signing, ensure parents/guardians clearly understand:

- Not following vaccination recommendations may endanger the health or life of the unvaccinated student and others.
- During a disease outbreak or after exposure, schools may exclude children who are not vaccinated to protect other students.
- The options available should they choose to vaccinate in the future.

By signing a Certificate of Religious Exemption Form, you are not verifying the listed objection or agreeing with it.

Your signature only indicates that you provided thorough education to the family about the importance of immunizations, the diseases they prevent, and the potential risks associated with remaining unvaccinated, including school exclusions under certain circumstances.

Note: The Religious Exemption Form should be signed by the same clinician responsible for performing the health examination.

➔ What Happens Next

Medical and religious exemptions are given to schools for review. Schools may need more information or follow up as needed.



Vaccine Requirements Save Lives!³

Partnering with school nurses and administration to ensure equitable and timely access to vaccination for students prior to school entry plays an important role in keeping children healthy and in promoting daily school attendance.

¹ *As outlined in the AAP Medical vs Nonmedical Immunization Exemptions for Child Care and School

² Attendance: Policy Statement

³ Child Health Examination Code

Red Book 2024–2027 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases

AAP Medical vs Nonmedical Immunization Exemptions for Child Care and School Attendance: Policy Statement