

Frank L. O'Bannon  
Governor

Richard D. Feldman, M.D.  
State Health Commissioner



# Indiana State Department of Health

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

## **POLICY ON RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION TO IMMUNIZATION AS APPLIED TO SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Indiana Code 20-8.1-7-2 as amended by the 1993 Indiana General Assembly states:

**"Except as otherwise provided, a school child may not be required to undergo any testing, examination, immunization, or treatment required under this chapter when the child's parent objects on religious grounds. A religious exemption does not exempt a child from any testing, examination, immunization, or treatment required under this chapter unless the objection is:**

- (1) made in writing;**
- (2) signed by the parent;**
- (3) delivered to the child's teacher or to the individual who might order a test, an exam, an immunization, or treatment absent the objection."**

The written document, signed by the parent, must state that the objection to immunization is based on religious grounds. There is no requirement that the statement must be from the pastor of a church, appear on church letterhead, or provide proof that they are members of a religious organization. The Indiana State Department of Health policy requires that the written statement be verified by the parent each year.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child has a medical/religious exemption to vaccination and is not fully immunized. Although your child remains at risk for getting a vaccine preventable disease, IC 20-34-4 permits your child to attend school.

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for which your child is not fully vaccinated, your child may be excluded from school to protect his/her health and the health of all our students and staff. It is important to understand that with some diseases such as measles, one infected child is an outbreak. The length of time your child will be kept out of school depends on the disease. Your child's exclusion may be as long as 3-4 weeks.

If your child is excluded from school, your child will also be excluded from school sponsored activities, such as sporting events, dances, and graduation that occur within the exclusion period. The school will notify you when your child can return to school.

Incompletely vaccinated children can be excluded from school due to cases of measles, chickenpox, pertussis, mumps, or any other vaccine preventable disease (at the discretion of the local health officer).

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**Acknowledgement of Consequences of Incomplete Vaccination**

I understand that my child may be excluded from school in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.

I understand that school exclusion includes after-school activities, such as sporting events, dances, and graduation.

I understand that my child may be required to stay home for multiple weeks during an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for which he/she is not vaccinated.

Parent's name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

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