



MEMORANDUM

TO: Our Lady of Grace School Community
FROM: Very Rev. Peter M. McGuine, Pastor 
RE: Medical and personal belief exemptions for students and the COVID vaccine
DATE: 17 February 2022

In the Diocese of San Diego and at Our Lady of Grace School (OLG), policies on COVID-19 safety are governed by three basic principles:

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

California 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 ten required vaccinations, only medical exemptions are allowed. There are no religious or personal belief exemptions for these ten.

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.

Legislative analysts working with the Diocese of San Diego and/or the California Conference of Catholic Bishops have reason to believe 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 vaccine mandate for their child/ren.

In implementing any legal mandate for COVID vaccinations that includes a personal belief exemption, OLG School will provide the form for and accept a completed parental or legal guardian request for exemption from the COVID vaccine mandate for their student/s as valid. Those students with a valid personal belief exemption will be expected to adhere to any applicable County Health orders, Federal and/or State mandates, or Diocese of San Diego directives and attend class in-person, provided the school and/or grade-level class is offering in-person instruction and the student/s:

- is/are not required to quarantine due to close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID;
- is/are not displaying any symptoms indicative of a COVID infection; or
- has/have not tested positive for COVID.

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Students with a valid medical exemption to the COVID vaccine provided by their family physician will follow the same course of action as outlined above for those with a valid personal belief exemption.

The OLG School Community can expect this approach to medical and personal belief exemptions to the COVID vaccine to remain in effect until the date a different person is assigned as Pastor or Administrator of OLG Parish by the Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego.

COVID-related mandates continue to divide our society. Parent communities in both public and private schools are similarly affected. Together with the Diocese of San Diego's Office for Schools, I hope that this course of action balances the need to protect the health of our students, teachers, and staff with the rights of parents and legal guardians to decide issues vital to their children and/or the children in their care.