

New Procedure for Filing a Religious Exemption for the Required Illinois Immunizations for the Diocese of Rockford

Please note the new updated due dates per the Diocese of Rockford

1. Parents requesting exemptions for their children from required immunizations must complete an *Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to the Required Illinois Immunization* form. This form is available at: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/immunization/religious-exemption.html> Certificate of Religious Exemption Forms must be completed thoroughly and include specific reasons why the parent is requesting the exemption. If the space provided is not sufficient, extra pages may be attached. A separate form is required for each child applying for an exemption.
2. The parent takes the completed form to their child's medical care provider who must inform the parent about the benefits and potential risks of having their child immunized. **The health care provider is required to sign and date the form and attach it to the child's new physical exam.**
3. The parent submits the signed religious exemption form along with a copy of his or her child's previous immunization record (if there is one) and updated physical exam directly to the student's school **on or before September 1, of the current school year**. The school will then forward it to Vito DeFrisco, Rockford Diocese Superintendent of Schools, for approval on or before October 1, of the school year.
4. The Superintendent of Schools will review the form and decide whether a waiver will be issued. If additional documentation is needed for a decision to be made, the student's school will contact the parent directly. Once the exemption has been approved by the School Superintendent, the approval letter will be mailed directly to the parent and a copy will be sent to the principal of the school the child attends. This copy should be placed in the child's health file.
5. The above application process for a religious exemption MUST be repeated ONLY in the years that a child is required to receive immunizations (grades K and 6)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING

ILLINOIS CERTIFICATE OF RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION TO REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS AND/OR EXAMINATIONS FORM

Who may use the Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form:

- Parents or legal guardians who are requesting a religious exemption to immunizations or examinations **must** use this form for students entering kindergarten, sixth, or ninth grades.
- A separate form must be used for **each child** with a religious exemption enrolled to enter any public, charter, private or parochial preschool, kindergarten, elementary or secondary school.
- This form may not be used for exemptions from immunizations and/or examination for personal or philosophical reasons. Illinois law does not allow for such exemptions. (See excerpts below from Public Act 099-0249 enacted August 3, 2015 at page bottom.)

When use of this form becomes required: October 16, 2015

How to complete the Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form:

- Complete the Parent/Guardian sections, which include key information about the student and the school the student will be entering, and the immunizations or examinations for which religious exemption is being requested. Provide a statement of religious belief(s) **for each vaccination/examination requested.**
- The form must be signed by the child's parent or legal guardian **AND** the child's health care provider* **responsible for performing the child's health examination.**
- Submit the completed form to local school authority on or before October 15th of the school year, or by an earlier enrollment date established by a school district.

Religious Exemption from Immunizations and/or Examination Form Process:

- The local school authority is responsible for determining whether the information supplied on the Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form constitutes a valid religious objection.
- The local school authority shall inform the parent or legal guardian, at the time that the exemption is presented, of exclusion procedures, should there be an outbreak of one or more diseases from which the student is not protected, in accordance with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) rules, Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690).
- Exempting a child from health, dental, or eye examination does not exempt the child from participation in the program of physical education training provided in Section 27-5 through 27-7 of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/27-5 through 105 ILCS 5/27-7]. A separate request for exemption from physical education, if desired, would need to be presented.

Excerpt from Public Act 099-0249 enacted August 3, 2015:

Children of parents or legal guardians who object to health, dental, or eye examinations or any part thereof, or to immunizations or to vision and hearing screening tests on religious grounds shall not be required to undergo the examinations or immunizations if the parents or legal guardians present to the appropriate local school authority a signed Certificate of Religious Exemption detailing the grounds for objection and the specific immunizations and/or examinations to which they object. The grounds for objection must set forth the specific religious belief(s) that conflict with the examination, immunization, or other medical intervention. The certificate will be signed by the parent or legal guardian to confirm their awareness of the school's exclusion policies in the case of a vaccine preventable disease outbreak or exposure. The certificate must also be signed by the child's health care provider responsible for performing the child's examination for entry into kindergarten, sixth or ninth grade. This signature affirms that the provider educated the parent or legal guardian about the benefits of immunization and the health risks to the student and to the community from the communicable diseases for which immunization is required in Illinois.

The religious objection provided need not be directed by the tenets of an established religious organization. However, general philosophical or moral reluctance to allow physical examinations, eye examinations, immunizations, vision and hearing screening or dental examinations will not provide a sufficient basis for an exception to statutory requirements. The local school authority is responsible for determining if the content of the Certificate of Religious Exemption constitutes a valid religious objection.

The local school authority shall inform the parent or legal guardian of exclusion procedures in accordance with IDPH's rules, Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690) at the time the objection is presented.

**ILLINOIS CERTIFICATE OF RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION
TO REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS AND/OR EXAMINATIONS FORM**

PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN - COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Note: This form is required for all students entering kindergarten, sixth or ninth grades when parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is requesting a religious exemption on or after October 16, 2015. This form also must be submitted to request religious exemption for any student enrolling to enter any public, charter, private or parochial preschool, kindergarten, elementary or secondary school on or after October 16, 2015.

This form may NOT be used for personal or philosophical reasons. Illinois law does not allow for such exemptions.

Student Name:(last, first, middle) _____	Student Date of Birth: Month Day Year _____	School Name: _____	Grade: _____
Parent/Guardian Name: _____	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	City: _____	
Address: _____ _____	Telephone Number(s): _____ _____	Exemption requested for (mark all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis B <input type="checkbox"/> DTaP <input type="checkbox"/> Polio <input type="checkbox"/> Hib <input type="checkbox"/> Pneumococcal <input type="checkbox"/> MMR <input type="checkbox"/> Varicella <input type="checkbox"/> Td/Tdap <input type="checkbox"/> Meningococcal <input type="checkbox"/> Health Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Eye Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Exam <input type="checkbox"/> Vision/Hearing Tests <input type="checkbox"/> Other (indicate below)	

To receive an exemption to vaccination/examination, a parent or legal guardian must provide a statement detailing the religious beliefs that prevent the child from receiving each required school vaccinations/examination being requested.

In the space provided below, state each vaccination or examination exemption requested and state the religious grounds for each request. If additional space is needed, attach additional page(s).

Religious Exemption Notice:

No student is required to have an immunization/examination that is contrary to the religious beliefs of his/her parent or legal guardian. However, not following vaccination recommendations may endanger the health or life of the unvaccinated student, others with whom they come in contact, and individuals in the community. In a disease outbreak, or after exposure to any of the diseases for which immunization is required, schools may exclude children who are not vaccinated in order to protect all students.

I have read the Religious Exemption Notice (above) and have provided requested information for each vaccination/examination being requested for religious exemption.

Signature of parent or legal guardian (required) _____

Date _____

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER* – COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Provision of information: I have provided the parent or legal guardian of the student named above, with information regarding **1) the required examinations, 2) the benefits of immunization, and 3) the health risks to the student and to the community from the communicable diseases for which immunization is required in Illinois.** I understand that my signature only reflects that this information was provided; I am not affirming the parent or legal guardian's religious beliefs regarding any examination, immunization or immunizing agent.

Health Care Provider Name: _____

Signature of health care provider* _____

Address: _____

Date: _____
(Must be within 1 year prior to school entry)

Telephone #: _____

*Health care provider responsible for performing child's health examination includes physicians licensed to practice medicine in all of its branches, advanced practice nurses, or physician assistants.