

**REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION TO IMMUNIZATION FORM
PARENT/GUARDIAN STATEMENT**

Name of Student: _____

Name of Parent(s)/Guardians(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

School/Town: _____

This form is for your use in applying for a religious exemption to Public Health Law immunization requirements for your child. Its purpose is to establish the religious basis for your request since the State permits exemptions on the basis of a sincere religious belief. Philosophical, political, scientific, or sociological objections to immunization do not justify an exemption under Department of Health regulation 10 NYCRR, Section 66-1.3(d). This regulation requires the submission of:

A written and signed statement from the parent, parents, or guardian of such child, stating that the parent, parents or guardian objects to their child's immunization due to sincere and genuine religious beliefs which prohibit the immunization of their child in which case the principal or person in charge may require supporting documents.

In the area provided below, please write your statement. The statement must address all of the following elements:

- **Explain in your own words why you are requesting this religious exemption.**
- **Describe the religious principles that guide your objection to immunization and if not, the religious basis that prohibits particular immunizations.**

You may attach to this form additional written pages or other supporting materials if you so choose.

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Please sign in the space provided below and have the document notarized by a notary public where indicated.

I hereby affirm the truthfulness of the forgoing statement and have received and reviewed the informational immunization materials provided to me by my child's school.

Signature of parent/Guardian

Date

Sworn to before me this _____ day of _____

Notary Public Seal

You will be notified in writing of the outcome of this request. Please note if your request for an exemption is denied, you may appeal the denial to the Commissioner of Education within thirty (30) days of the decision, pursuant to Education Law, Section 310.

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SECTION BELOW FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

To the School Principal:

If, after review of the parental statement, questions remain about the existence of a sincerely held religious belief, Department of Health regulation [10 NYCRR, Section 66-1.3(d)] permits the principal to request supporting documents. Some examples include:

- A letter from an authorized representative of the church, temple, religious institution, etc. attended by the parent/guardian, literature from the church, temple, religious institution, etc. explaining doctrine/beliefs that prohibit immunization (Note: Parents/guardians need not necessarily be a member of an organized religion or religious institution to obtain a religious exemption);
- Other writings or sources upon which the parent/guardian relied in formulating religious beliefs that prohibit immunization;
- A copy of any parental/guardian statements to healthcare providers or school district officials in a district of prior residence explaining the religious basis for refusing immunization;
- Any documents or other information the parent/guardian may be willing to provide that reflect a sincerely held religious objection to immunization (for example: disclosure of whether parent/guardian or other children have been immunized, parent/guardian's current position on allowing himself or herself or his or her children to receive or refuse other kinds of medical treatment.)

Reviewer Names
(Superintendent of
Schools) _____

(Principal of School)

Indicate Result of Request Review:

APPROVED Date of Approval _____

DENIED Date of Denial _____

State specifically Reason(s) for Denial:



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

128 Cherry Lane, Hicksville, New York 11801



*Office of the
Superintendent*

To Whom It May Concern:

Please submit a letter addressed to Dr. Kathleen Walsh, Superintendent that follows the guidelines below along with the enclosed form for submitting your letter requesting an exemption from immunizations for your child. Please keep in mind *the labeling of personal beliefs as "religious" does not entitle a person to a religious exemption*. Please also note that all rights are reserved to require additional supporting documents after your statement is reviewed including, without limitation:

- (1) Written support from an authorized representative of your church, temple or religious institution explaining your doctrines or beliefs;
- (2) Other writings or sources upon which your beliefs were formed;
- (3) Statements you have made to healthcare providers or school district officials; and/or
- (4) Other documentation that would reflect a sincerely held religious belief.

This is the criteria which must be followed. When submitting your request, please keep these guidelines in mind.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Walsh, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Department of Education
Diocese of Rockville Centre
128 Cherry Lane, Hicksville NY 11801
(516) 280-2479, Ext. 847

Requesting a Religious Exemption to Immunization

DATE: April 2017

MEMO TO: Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

FROM: Department of Education

Below is information on how to Request a *Religious* Exemption to Immunization.

Attached documents for review:

- Bishop's Statement on Immunization
- Superintendent's Guidelines for requesting a religious exemption

Required Original Documents to be mailed to Dr. Kathleen Walsh, Superintendent:

- **Document 1: Form: Request for Religious Exemption to Immunization; *complete and notarize (attached):***
 - Page 1 (top): Enter, Child's Name, Name of Parent/Guardian(s), address, phone, email, school, and school town
 - Page 1 (bottom, read carefully): Write a written statement citing your sincere genuine *religious* beliefs which would prohibit the immunization of your child. Use below as a guide in writing your statement;
 - Why you are requesting *religious* exemption
 - Describe your *religious* principles that guide you to object immunization
 - Quote scriptures to show your basis that prohibits immunizations
 - Page 2: Continue your statement, sign, and have notarized
- **Document 2: Prepare a Letter to Dr. Kathleen Walsh, Superintendent**
 - Write that you are requesting a religious exemption to immunization for your child or children. Write their name(s), school, and grade within letter.
 - Describe your detailed religious beliefs that guide you to object immunization (ex. quote scripture) (you can use the same statement you prepared on your form)
 - Make sure to have your home address, phone, and email address in the letter.

Mail the Original Signed/Notarized Form and Signed Letter to:

Dr. Kathleen Walsh, Superintendent
Department of Education, DRVC
128 Cherry Lane
Hicksville, NY 11801



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Religious Exemptions for Immunization in Catholic Schools

From time to time Catholics have raised the question to us about their conscience problem regarding certain strains of vaccinations which they claim are derived originally from aborted fetuses. For that reason they state that they have a conscientious objection to the immunization of their children with vaccines that are derived even remotely from such strains.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center has examined these claims at great length. It has reviewed the literature on the subject. It has contacted the Pontifical Academy for Life and discussed this issue with them. Their conclusion is that the only strains that can be traced to aborted fetuses go back to the 1960's. Their moral theologians have given sound advice to the Bishops of the United States to say that this is so remote as not to constitute any kind of cooperation with an abortion of the fetus now more than 40 years ago. As Bishop of this Diocese who must exercise his own moral judgment, I concur with the position of the National Catholic Bioethics Center and I would like to state that the position that claims that these vaccines cannot be used because of its cooperation in abortion is not a position that can be tenably held based on the basic principles of Catholic moral reasoning. Therefore, it is quite licit for Catholics to have their children immunized with vaccines that are drawn from the strains that are indicated in the reports from the National Catholic Bioethics Center.

If a Catholic claims that his or her conscience is being violated by this, then I as Bishop must inform them that their conscience is not properly informed. As the teacher of this Diocese, I insist upon this. Therefore, I do not recognize that a Catholic can claim that as a Catholic he or she can exempt themselves from immunization because of the possibility of cooperation in evil by the use of these vaccines. If, however, Catholics insist that on the basis of their own conscience, which is not properly informed by Catholic teaching, that they have difficulties with accepting the use of these vaccines, then I believe that the Office of the Superintendent of Schools can make a prudential judgment based upon the circumstances in which these questions arise. Therefore, we will allow exceptions but not based upon any recognition on the part of the Catholic Church that the use of these vaccines in any way constitutes cooperation with evil.

With my prayers and best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ John O. Bane
Bishop of Rockville Centre