

Frequently Asked Questions on Personal Belief Exemptions (AB 2109)

1. Starting in 2014, what are the legal requirements for personal beliefs exemptions (PBE) to immunizations required for school or child care?

Effective January 1, 2014, parents who want to exempt their child from one or more required immunizations because of their personal beliefs must provide to the school or child care facility:

- A letter or affidavit requesting an exemption that states that the required immunization(s) are contrary to their beliefs, and
- A statement signed and dated by a health care practitioner and parent indicating that the practitioner has provided, and the parent has received, information about the benefits and risks of immunizations and the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Parents and health care practitioners must use the one-page [form](#) that meets all the above requirements developed by the California Department of Public Health and available from many schools and health care practitioners.
- Most children with exemptions have received some of their required vaccines. In addition to the vaccines for which an exemption is being requested, parents must show the school or child care facility a valid record of which of the immunizations required for school or child care that their child has received. This will help schools know right away which students have and haven't been immunized when a vaccine-preventable disease may be spreading at school.

2. Who are affected by the new requirements?

- All students newly admitted to a California school, kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12), and students advancing to 7th grade, and children newly admitted to a child care facility.
- All public and private schools and child care facilities.

3. When does the new law take effect?

January 1, 2014.

4. Will all children with existing vaccination exemptions on file be required to file a new form?

Usually not. Children do not need to file a new exemption form unless they are being newly admitted into a public or private:

- Child care facility
- Kindergarten
- Entering or advancing in to the 7th grade; or

- Transferring from out-of state into California.

Children transferring from one grade school in California to another school in California and not starting kindergarten or 7th grade for the first time do not need to provide a new exemption form, as their exemptions from the prior schools should be part of the records being transferred to the new schools.

5. Should the “Personal Beliefs Exemption to Required Immunization” (CDPH 8262) form be used instead of the Personal Beliefs Affidavit on page 2 of the “California School Immunization Record” (Form 286, aka “Blue Card”)?

Yes. In 2014 and future years, the California School Immunization Record (Form 286) should no longer be used to request an exemption.

6. Should the “Personal Beliefs Exemption to Required Immunization” (CDPH 8262) form be used instead of the “Personal Beliefs Exemption Form for the Tdap 7th grade requirement” (IMM-101PBE)?

Yes. In 2014 and future years, the Personal Beliefs Exemption Form for the Tdap 7th grade requirement (IMM-101PBE) should no longer be used to request an exemption.

7. May the completed “Personal Beliefs Exemption to Required Immunization” (CDPH 8262) form be attached to “California School Immunization Record” (Form 286, aka “Blue Card”)?

School staff may attach the two forms, but this is not required.

8. What will the health care practitioner discuss with the parent or guardian?

The health care practitioner should provide information about the:

- Benefits and risks of required immunizations.
- Health risks of the specific vaccine-preventable diseases to the child and the community.

Health care practitioners often personalize their discussions to the specific questions and needs of each patient or family. CDPH has compiled [materials](#) that may be helpful in informing parents and guardians about immunizations and vaccine-preventable diseases.

In addition to California law, Federal law requires that healthcare staff provide standardized [Vaccine Information Statements](#) to parents and guardians before immunizations are administered. These statements also contain information about immunizations and the diseases they prevent.

9. Are authorized health care practitioners required to assist in requests for exemptions to immunizations?

Any authorized health care practitioner may provide information about immunizations and sign the exemption form. However, providers are not required to carry out these tasks. Parents or guardians seeking exemptions should check with practitioners in advance to clarify their policies on assisting with exemption requests.

10. Are exemptions for religious reasons allowed?

Yes. A parent or guardian may request an exemption and speak with a health care practitioner regarding immunizations and vaccine preventable diseases. If the family's religion does not permit members to get medical advice or treatment from a health care practitioner, the parent or guardian does not need to get a signature or information about immunizations from a practitioner. The parent or guardian must still provide an affidavit requesting a personal beliefs exemption from required immunizations. The standard personal beliefs exemption [form](#) includes a check box for exemptions due to religious beliefs.

11. Who can sign the personal beliefs exemption form or other personal beliefs exemption documentation?

The following types of health care practitioners are authorized by law to sign personal beliefs exemption documentation if they are licensed and/or credentialed in California:

- Medical Doctor (MD)
- Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Nurse practitioner (NP)
- Physician assistant (PA)
- Naturopathic doctor
- Credentialed school nurse
- The parent, legal guardian, or emancipated minor must also sign the documentation required to obtain a personal beliefs exemption.

12. When can personal beliefs exemption documents be signed?

The personal beliefs exemption documentation must be signed no sooner than six months before a student is admitted to a child care facility or K-12, or before advancing to 7th grade. For example, if school begins on September 1, the documentation could be signed on or after March 1 but not before. The date of admission or advancement is the first day of attendance at the school or child care, not the day of registration.

13. Where can I find additional information about recommended immunizations and vaccine-preventable diseases?

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [immunization website](#) for parents.

- Vaccine Information Statements contain useful information about immunizations and the diseases they prevent: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/index.html>.
- Additional resources on vaccine safety are available from the:
 - [California Department of Public Health, Immunization Branch](#)
 - [California Immunization Coalition](#)
 - [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Vaccine Education Center](#)
 - [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

14. Where can I review the new law?

[AB 2109](#) (Pan), Chapter 821, Statutes of 2012 , amending Health & Safety Code, Section 120365

15. Does the “Personal Beliefs Exemption to Required Immunization” (CDPH 8262) form require notarization?

No, the form does not need to be notarized.