

Recent Legislation on Vaccines: SB277

In June 2015, Gov. Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 277 into law. The legislation provides that parents/guardians will no longer be able to refuse to vaccinate their children based on a personal belief exemption if their children attend public or private school.

SB 277 will go into effect for the 2016-2017 school year. Parents/guardians can still file for a vaccine exemption for their children based on their personal beliefs until January 1, 2016. This Fact Sheet explains how SB 277 will be implemented.

Current law

As a condition of school enrollment, current law requires students at specified age and grade levels to provide documentation that they have been immunized against certain diseases. However, exemptions have been available based on the beliefs of parents/ guardians or due to medical reasons.

Personal beliefs exemption

Under current law, students can receive exemptions for immunizations based on the beliefs of their parents/guardians. If parents/guardians choose not to vaccinate their children because of personal beliefs, they must work with a health care provider to submit a Personal Beliefs Exemption Form in place of immunization records.

Medical exemption

If a student is exempted for medical reasons, parents/guardians need to submit a letter from a health care provider documenting the medical exemption in place of immunization records. SB 277 does not affect medical exemptions.

Students with individual education programs

Students who have an individual education program (IEP) should continue to receive all necessary services identified in his or her IEP regardless of his or her vaccination status.

Exclusions from school

Students who are exempted from being immunized may be required to stay away from school following a confirmed case of an infectious disease at their school for which they have not been vaccinated. This does not change when SB 277 goes into effect.

What's new under SB 277

Effective July 1, 2016, students who attend public or private school can no longer be exempted from vaccinations because of the beliefs of their parents when they hit a mandated checkpoint for ensuring immunizations: kindergarten, seventh grade, or a transfer to a new district. For example, a first grader who has a personal belief exemption on file before January 1, 2016, may remain in school within the same district without being vaccinated until he or she starts seventh grade. An eighth grader who has a personal belief exemption on file before January 1, 2016, may remain in a school in the same district without being vaccinated for the remainder of schooling.

For further information regarding SB277 please go to <http://www.shotsforschool.org/>

For specific information regarding child care, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/child-care/>

For kindergarten, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/k-12/>

For 7th grade, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/7th-grade/>

For students entering or transferring into California schools at other grade levels, see <http://www.shotsforschool.org/k-12/>