

October 26, 2015

Dear SunRidge School Parents,

This letter is to inform you of the effects of new legislation regarding immunization requirements in the state of California. **The law is known as SB 277 and it changes California's vaccination requirements for public and private schools.** SB 277 was signed into law over the summer. A recent referendum initiative did not obtain enough signatures to put the legislation to a vote. Thus SB 277 becomes effective on January 1, 2016 and ends the personal belief exemption and on July 1, 2016 new school enrollment immunization requirements become effective.

There were several amendments made to the final bill and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has also issued guidelines further clarifying the new requirements. Here are the main points of the new law:

- A. Eliminates the personal belief exemption (including the religious exemption) for current state required vaccinations for public and private school students.
 - Medical exemptions are still allowed.
 - If the CDPH decides to add other vaccination requirements, parents will be allowed to obtain personal belief exemptions for those new vaccinations.
 - Allows personal belief exemptions already on file with a school in California prior to December 31, 2015 to remain valid until a student reaches the next checkpoint (i.e. grade span).
 - The personal belief exemption also remains valid if the student transfers to another school prior to reaching one of the checkpoints.
- C. Establishes three grade spans: (1) Birth to preschool; (2) Kindergarten to Grade 6; and (3) Grade 7 to Grade 12. Entry into any of the grade spans is considered a checkpoint. Personal belief exemptions are no longer valid when a student reaches the next checkpoint (in our school's case mainly when students enter Kindergarten or 7th Grade).
 - **Students who reach a checkpoint may not be enrolled or allowed to attend any public or private school unless they meet the CDPH Immunization Requirements for their age.**
- D. Requires that students who transfer in from out-of-state (to any grade) meet the CDPH Immunization Requirements.

Detailed below is additional information pertaining to the new law and how it may impact your children and our school. In all cases please confer with your doctor about vaccinations. Our school is still working to understand all of the details of implementing the new law and regulations. We are also working to update our admissions policies and some policy related information below is subject to change pending further guidance from the CDPH and legal counsel. **The consequences to the school of not complying with the law are steep, up to and including the potential loss of our Charter.**

- 1) For the next school year beginning in August 2016, students who are (a) entering Kindergarten for the first time or (b) entering 7th Grade (current 6th graders) will be required to meet the CDPH Immunization Requirements for their age.

- 2) Eventually all students in our school will need to meet the CDPH Immunization Requirements. Students currently enrolled who have a personal belief exemption form on file with the school will have to meet the requirements by the time they are ready to enter 7th grade. All students entering Kindergarten for the first time or transferring from out-of-state will be required to meet the new requirements.
- 3) Students entering 8th grade next year who have a personal belief exemption form on file with the school will **not** have to meet the CDPH requirements. Their personal belief exemptions will be valid through high school graduation.
- 4) Full details of the CDPH Immunization Requirements can be found at: www.shotsforschool.org

The following list of required immunizations is taken from their website:

- a. Incoming Kindergarten students require the following immunizations (13 - 15 total doses)
 1. Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, or DT) - 5 doses
(4 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday)
 2. Polio (OPV or IPV) - 4 doses
(3 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday)
 3. Hepatitis B - 3 doses
 4. Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - 2 doses
 5. Varicella (Chickenpox) - 1 dose
 - b. Incoming 7th Grade students require the following immunizations (11 -13 total doses)
 1. Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, DT, Tdap, or Td)- 3 doses
(4 doses required if last one was given before 2nd birthday)
 2. Polio (OPV or IPV)-4 doses
(3 doses OK if one was given on or after 2nd birthday)
 3. Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - 2 doses
 4. Varicella (chickenpox) – 2 doses
 5. Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap) booster - 1 dose
- 5) If your child is not **fully** immunized prior to being enrolled in 7th Grade or Kindergarten, the current regulations allow for what is referred to as "conditional admission." What this basically requires is that:
 1. Your child receives at least the first dose of all required vaccines prior to admission;
 2. Your child not be currently due for any doses at the time of admission; and
 3. Your child completes all the remaining doses when they become due in accordance with the official "Conditional Admission Immunization Schedule".
 - Please note that if a student is “conditionally admitted” and does not receive the remaining doses when due, the law states that the student may not attend school. If, after 45 days,

the student has not received the remaining doses the student will be dis-enrolled from the school and the student will need to re-apply after they have received the remaining doses. If there is a waiting list for the class, the next student on the waiting list will be offered admission to the class.

- 6) To provide you an idea of the time schedule for each immunization, the chart below illustrates the *Conditional Immunization Schedule* for Kindergarten and Grade 7 based on information provided on the CDPH's www.shotsforschools.org website.

KG Conditional Immunization Schedule (No Prior Immunizations - Maximum Interval)

	Tot Req	Dose #	Month																	Interval from Last Dose			
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		18	19	
Polio	3	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd			x																		< 10 wks
		3rd															x						< 12 mos.
DTP	4	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd			x																		< 8 wks
		3rd					x																< 8 wks
		4th																	x				< 12 mos.
MMR	2	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd				x																	< 3 mos.
Hep B	3	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd			x																		< 2 mos.
		3rd									x												< 6 mos.
C Pox (Var)	1	1st	x																			Before Admit	

Grade 7 Conditional Immunization Schedule (No Prior Immunizations - Maximum Interval)

	Tot Req	Dose #	Month																	Interval from Last Dose			
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		18	19	
Polio	3	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd			x																		< 10 wks
		3rd															x						< 12 mos.
DTP	3	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd			x																		< 8 wks
		3rd															x						< 12 mos.
Tdap (-a)	1	1st	x																				
MMR	2	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd				x																	< 3 mos.
Hep B (-b)																							
C Pox (Var)	2	1st	x																			Before Admit	
		2nd				x																	< 3 mos.

(-a) Tdap booster is required before entry to Gr7

(-b) Hep B is not required for advance to Gr7

- 8) Our current rate of full immunization for Grade 6 is 33%. Our current rate of full immunization for the Kindergartens is 16%. If this is not addressed proactively by parents, the school's enrollment will be strongly affected.

- 9) If you believe your child is eligible for a medical exemption please consult with your doctor.

The following information was reported by Jane Meredith Adams in EdSource (updated 9/22/15):

Students may obtain a written medical exemption to vaccinations from a licensed physician medical doctor (M.D.) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (D.O.) There is no standard medical exemption form but the statement must say:

- *That the physical condition or medical circumstances of the child, which may include family medical history, are such that the required immunization(s) is not indicated*
- *Which vaccines are being exempted*
- *Whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary*
- *The expiration date, if the exemption is temporary.*

Students who are not fully immunized or on a schedule of immunization cannot attend SunRidge's classroom-based program next fall. If your child does not meet the CDPH Immunization Requirements and cannot obtain a Medical Exemption the only educational option available is a home-school or independent study program **without classroom instruction**. Any home-school or independent study program that has a classroom component also requires students to meet the CDPH Immunization Requirements. Most home-school and independent-study programs provided by school districts and charter schools have a classroom component; however, we are researching whether that will be possible next year for SunRidge's home study program.

I realize this new law is troubling to those who believe strongly in the previous availability of a personal belief exemption. For others in our community, immunization is viewed as safe and their children are fully immunized. For still others, their children have been partially immunized and parents must now consider fully immunizing. The SunRidge community has many diverse viewpoints and it is important to be respectful of this diversity as we address this new requirement for public school attendance. I have provided information through the school's newsletter since last spring after discussing this legislation with the district's superintendent, members of our parent community, neighboring Waldorf school administrators (many thanks to Chris Topham for sharing much of this letter's information) and faculty, as well as state health and education officials, doctors, nurses and alternative health care practitioners, charter school advocates and others as I sought to understand the new law. An informational meeting is being held on November 5th from 7-8 at the Sebastopol Downtown Charter, for parents to hear directly from the Sonoma County Health Department and ask questions. I am looking into the feasibility of providing low or no cost immunization clinics in Sebastopol. I will also be available on Tuesday, November 10th from 8:15 -9:15 in the library to meet with parents regarding this topic. **My intention is to support students staying with their classes so that the classroom activities, field trips, and other meaningful social learning opportunities a school provides remain accessible to all of our valued students.**

Sincerely,

Kalen Wood

Director