



Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding House Bill 561, the C.H.O.I.C.E. Act. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of legislation that seeks to ensure transparency and respect for parental rights within Ohio's education and childcare systems.

My name is Stephanie Stock, and I serve as President of Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom (OAMF), a grassroots organization representing thousands of Ohio families who believe strongly in informed consent, medical transparency, and parental rights. I am here today to testify in strong support of House Bill 561 because it helps ensure that parents are given complete and accurate information about their legal rights regarding childhood immunization policies in schools and childcare settings.

During over a decade of volunteer service to OAMF, I have assisted hundreds of parents in navigating complicated school forms, forms with requirements outside of the law—often times incriminating the parent as being some sort of threat to their children and others. I have heard countless stories of denial of entrance to daycares and schools across the state with essentially no recourse for parents.

In 2018, several Jewish families reach out to me from the Cleveland and Columbus areas telling me their elementary schools were no longer accepting conscientious or religious exemptions and were going to strictly monitor any medical exemptions. These schools were both registered non-public charter schools and were required to follow state law; however, they insisted they did not have to comply. I spent almost six months working with a member of the Board of Education and their legal team in an attempt to enforce the schools' compliance with the law. They wrote one threatening letter and then took no further action because there is no set penalty in state law for noncompliance. The Board of Education had their hands tied, and the result was that the majority of those families left the state in search of a Jewish school that would respect their religious beliefs.

No parent in Ohio should be turned away from a licensed daycare or a chartered Ohio school based on their child's vaccination status when we have had three clear exemptions in state law since the 70s. Ohio should be a state known for protecting parental rights, which includes a parent's right to know that exemption options exist and that if they choose to take an exemption, it will be honored.



The notion that parents should be inherently aware that they have the right to decline is absurd. If all communication from the school or daycare indicates the vaccines are required and the school nurse tells you it's required, then a parent has no reason to suspect otherwise or further investigate. Vaccines are medical products with known risk of death and disability and they are mandated under state law unless the parents submit an exemption. To a parent who is not made aware that exemptions exist, then they are living in a state with government mandated vaccines, no different than California or any of the other anti-parental rights states

How many children in the state of Ohio have been vaccine injured because an administrator or a school nurse was dishonest with a parent? We will never know. Not one infant or child should be put at risk for a vaccine injury simply because a school or daycare facility did not want to be truthful about state-allowed exemptions. Neither the nurse nor the administrator is the one who will suffer the emotional, social, and financial consequences of that injury—the parents will.

While we applaud Ohio for being one of the states that has offered parents the right to exemptions, we have fallen short in making sure that this law is written in a way that ensures enforcement occurs, that parents are able to make truly informed decisions, and that parents are not badgered or harassed to defend or explain their conscientious beliefs. Even when schools acknowledge that exemptions exist, many families encounter additional obstacles that are not required under state law. Parents have reported being asked to complete special school-created exemption forms, submit notarized statements, or obtain signatures from a physician before an exemption will be accepted. Some families have even been told they must meet with school administrators or provide written explanations of their beliefs before an exemption is approved. These types of additional hurdles can create unnecessary pressure and confusion for parents attempting to exercise rights that are already clearly recognized in Ohio statute. The C.H.O.I.C.E. Act helps ensure consistency and transparency so that families are not subjected to unnecessary barriers when exercising those rights.

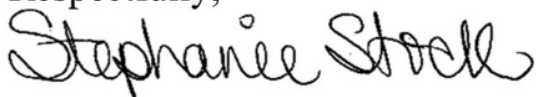
B 561 also addresses the portion of the law regarding outbreak exclusions because schools have expanded exclusions far beyond what is allowed. Various schools across the state are not just excluding unvaccinated children for the duration of "chickenpox epidemics" that "exist in the school's population," as the law is written; they are excluding unvaccinated children from school for various other infectious diseases, and they are setting arbitrary

time frames for the exclusion of the pupil with no mention to the parents of how the child’s “academic standing” shall be “preserved” during the exclusion. Current state law requires schools to adopt policies that prescribe the method of how excluded pupils are going to be able to maintain their studies while they are home, but parents are not told that either. These schools are telling parents they can be excluded for any number of weeks or even months if an outbreak occurs—not just during an outbreak in the school population, but even in the surrounding community. Most parents cannot withstand that length of exclusion, and it could drive them to vaccinate their child against their own better judgment out of desperation. It’s time for this section of the law to be written in a way that protects children who take exemptions from being excluded as a form of punishment and coercion. HB 561 ensures that only children who are infectious will be excluded from school until it is determined they are no longer contagious. We should not continue to be a state that penalizes parents for their vaccination choices and discriminates against their healthy children.

Many Ohio parents have report that schools and childcare facilities communicate immunization policies in a way that implies families have no choice. For example, parents have shared that school enrollment packets often contain language stating that “all students must be fully vaccinated before attending school,” with no mention of exemptions permitted under Ohio law. Situations like these create confusion and lead many parents to believe they must comply with vaccination schedules regardless of their beliefs or medical concerns. I have attached several examples of school notifications to this testimony.


House Bill 561 is a meaningful step toward transparency, protecting parental rights, and respect for informed consent. It does not eliminate vaccination requirements or prevent families from choosing vaccination for their children. Instead, it ensures that parents receive accurate information about their legal options so they can make informed healthcare decisions. I respectfully urge this committee to support House Bill 561 and move this important legislation forward.

Respectfully,



Stephanie Stock
President, OAMF

A few examples of schools and daycares lying to, misleading, or threatening parents:

Yes, Queen of Peace in Millville (Butler County) is registered with the state of Ohio as a nonpublic school. According to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce data, it is categorized as a chartered nonpublic school associated with the Cincinnati Archdiocese.  Ohio.gov +1

2. Health Records and Immunizations

Complete health records for each student will be maintained under direction of the school nurse. These records will include the student's immunization records as required by the Ohio Department of Health (under authority granted in Sections 3313.671 and 3701.13 of the Ohio Revised Code). "Queen of Peace School complies with the minimum immunization requirements set forth by R.C. 3313.67 and 3313.671. Although Queen of Peace School complies with those minimum immunization requirements, it also retains discretion to enforce stricter requirements at any time, for instance, by requiring vaccination even over a guardian's conscience or religious conviction objection or by revoking a previous exception."

All students must be immunized according to State Board of Health requirements.

Students may not be allowed in class if records and immunizations are not up to date.

While the State Board of Health does provide a "Waiver for Immunizations" for medical or religious reasons, Queen of Peace School, as a nonpublic school, is not required to accept these waivers. Our policy regarding a waiver for immunizations is for "documented medical conditions" only. Such a condition must be verified (by providing a medical reason why an immunization is not recommended for the child) and documented in writing by a licensed medical practitioner.



Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom

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Saints Joseph and John School Handbook 2025-2026 (1).pdf

DIGITAL ACADEMY EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

non-prescription, such as Tylenol, Advil, Dimetapp, etc. must be in the original container.

Immunizations

All students must have their immunizations to be admitted to class. If a student does not have all of their immunizations, an exemption form will need to be completed in order to be admitted to class.

Dentist and Doctor Appointments

SJJ Clinic <sjjclinic@sjsjschool.org> Tue, Sep 13, 2022, 10:34 AM
to me ▾

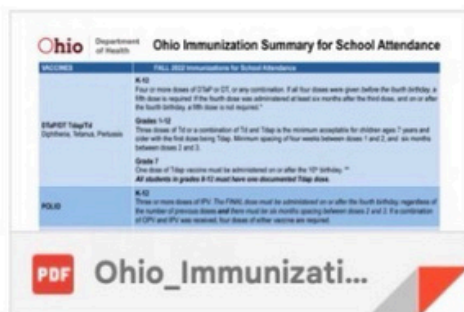
Good morning,

I am attaching the immunization form and requirements to this email. Please fill out and return to me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you!

Andrea Ziemer, CMA
Sts. Joseph and John School
12580 Pearl Road | Strongsville, OH 44136

2 Attachments • Scanned by Gmail Add all to Drive





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Official ODH form citing code and making parents to believe they have NO choice:



Ohio Department of Health School and Adolescent Health Immunization Report

Student's Name	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Date of Birth / /
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Students are required to be immunized in accordance with Ohio law (Ohio Revised Code 3313.67/3313.671). A copy of the child's immunization record may be attached or dates may be entered below. Please note the month, day and year for each immunization should be on record.

Vaccine	Record complete dates (month, day, year) of vaccine doses given
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTap,DT, Tdap, Td)	
Polio	
Hepatitis B (HBV)	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	
Varicella (Chicken pox)	
Hepatitis A	
Meningococcal (MCV4)	
Pneumococcal (PCV)	
Measles (Rubeola) only	
Rubella only	
Mumps only	
Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib)	
Influenza	
Other	


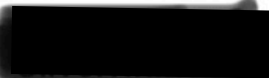

This information was provided by Health Care Provider Parent/Guardian Other _____


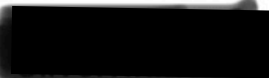

Signature	Print Name	Date / /
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<  **Central OHIO Parents' Rights In Education**  

 Nickname  · 1d · 

I got a letter today saying my child "will be excluded from school for 21-28 days" unless I can show proof of 2 doses of the MMR vaccine in the event of a measles case in his school building.

How is this legal? They are actively planning on EXCLUDING CHILDREN FROM EDUCATION. My son has an IEP. How can they exclude him? But really how can they say any child would be excluded from public school??

Is there anyone who can point me to an attorney that might have answers for me??

This is Hilliard.



Like



Comment



Share

  · 5h

My daughter was forced to get a measles vaccine to enter a private high school 6 years ago. She had no childhood shots. She had an anaphylactic response. She was given a medical exemption for future shots. Currently she had to drop out of nursing school after one semester. The Cleveland Clinic wouldn't let her do a clinical rotation because she never had a chickenpox vaccine. 🤔

Reply

Hide



Current law only allows a period of exclusion for chicken pox, this school is threatening to exclude unvaccinated children from measles for 21 days PAST the LAST case of rash to appear- which could be as long as 1-3 months

Wynford Board of Education

Forrest Trisler, Superintendent
Leesa Smith, Treasurer

3288 Holmes Center Road • Bucyrus, Ohio 44820
Phone (419) 562-7828

October 10, 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian,

There is a measles outbreak currently in our country among unvaccinated people. A central Ohio school district near Columbus just had its first case of measles last week.

You are receiving this letter because according to our records, your student is not vaccinated or fully vaccinated with the MMR vaccine. If someone at your student's school gets measles, your child may not be allowed to come to school.

Staff or students with measles will be excluded from school until four days have passed since they got a rash.

A person without evidence of measles immunity (vaccinated for measles) may be excluded from school until 21 days after the beginning of a rash in the last person with measles.

Anyone who has never received a MMR vaccine is at high risk of measles and should be vaccinated at:

- Your family doctor or health care provider
- Crawford County Public Health - (419) 562-5871
- A retail pharmacy or clinic

Measles is extremely contagious—and it is preventable.

If exposed to measles, 90% of unvaccinated individuals will develop the disease. The MMR vaccine is safe and highly effective at preventing measles—and it does not cause autism. One dose of MMR vaccine is 93% effective, and two doses are 97% effective at preventing measles.

Measles is a serious disease that can cause complications—and death.

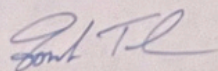
30% of people get complications—and one of every five people are hospitalized. Death from measles occurs in one to two people per 1,000 cases in the U.S. People at the greatest risk for severe illness and complications are children younger than 5, adults older than 20, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems.

Complications of measles can be serious and include:

- Ear infections
- Pneumonia - the most common cause of death from measles in young children
- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain)
- Seizures
- Premature or low-birth-weight baby
- Death

I urge you to learn more about measles by speaking with your family physician and acting to protect your child as soon as possible with a MMR vaccine. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school nurse, Mrs. Michelle Johnston, at johnston.michelle@wynfordroyals.org or 419-562-7828 x338. Additional information may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles>

With your student's good health and education in mind,



Forrest Trisler, Superintendent
Wynford Local Schools



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KENSTON
S C H O O L S



KENSTON
S C H O O L S

Dear Parents:

Pupils enrolled in Preschool through Grade 12 are required to have on file, at their school, written proof that they have received the following immunizations which are required under Ohio Law Sections 3313.671 and 3701.13 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Preschool

DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) – Four (4) doses
Polio (Poliomyelitis) – Three (3) doses
MMR (Mumps, Measles, Rubella) – One (1) dose
Hepatitis B – Three (3) doses
Varicella (Chickenpox) – One (1) dose
Hepatitis A – Two (2) doses
HIB (Haemophilus influenza, type B) - Four (4) doses
Influenza - Four (4) doses
Pneumococcal - Four (4) doses
Rotavirus – Three (3) doses

Kindergarten

DPT/DtaP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) – Four (4) or Five (5) doses
Polio (Poliomyelitis) – Three (3) or Four (4) doses
MMR – Two (2) doses
Hepatitis B – Three (3) doses
Varicella (Chickenpox) – Two (2) doses

Grades 1 – 12

DPT/DtaP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) – Three (3) or Four (4) doses
Polio (Poliomyelitis) – Three (3) or Four (4) doses
MMR – Two (2) doses
Hepatitis B – Three (3) doses
Varicella (Chickenpox) – Two (2) doses

Grade 7

DPT/DtaP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) – One (1) dose
MCV4 (Meningococcal) – One (1) dose

Grade 12

MCV4 (Meningococcal) – Two (2) dose

According to Sections 3313.671 and 3701.13 and of the Ohio Revised Code on the 15th day after school entrance it will be necessary to exclude from school all pupils who have not been adequately immunized.

*Please contact your physician or the Ohio Department of Health Immunization Program at (800) 282-0546 or (614) 466-4643 with questions or concerns.

Please complete the attached School Entrance Medical Record and Immunization Information Form.

Revised: 1/2019

February 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you prepare for your child to begin Kindergarten, there are medical forms which will need to be completed and returned.

At Registration:

- 1) **School Entrance Medical Record:** This form should be completed and signed by the parent/guardian. On this form, you will be able to communicate any health conditions, concerns, allergies and medications.
- 2) **Immunization Records:** Whether complete or still missing your child's final series of vaccinations for school, immunization records should be turned in at registration.

At Screening:

- 3) **Kindergarten School Entrance Physical Examination and Immunizations:** This form will be completed and signed by your child's physician. The physical must have been completed within the last year (between August 17, 2021 and August 17, 2022). Your pediatrician will ensure immunization records are current and provide dates of the immunizations, which is a State requirement for your child to attend school.

Sincerely,

Mary Monroe, R.N.
Timmons Nurse

Richard D. Timmons
Elementary School

9595 E. Washington Street
Chagrin Falls, Ohio
44023-2762
Phone: (440) 543-9380
Fax: (440) 543-9163
www.kenstonlocal.org

David R. Rogaliner
Principal

Kristen Hasenohr
Assistant Principal



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NSG-099.RC.12
Rev. 05/2022

North Royalton City Schools

North Royalton High School

14713 Ridge Road • North Royalton, Ohio 44133
Phone (440) 582-7801 • Fax (440) 582-7337 • www.northroyaltonsd.org

To Parent/Guardian of students entering 12th grade in the 2022-23 school year:

The Ohio Department of Health has updated the immunization requirements for students entering 12th grade. **All Ohio students entering 12th grade must now have had the meningococcal vaccine administered prior to entry**

- If your student received a dose of meningococcal vaccine on or after his/her 16th birthday, please provide that information including date of vaccination from your healthcare provider.
- If your student's first dose was administered prior to his/her 16th birthday, a second dose is required (with a recommended interval of (8) eight weeks between dose #1 and dose #2).
- Your student will need to show proof of having received the required vaccine(s) **on or before September 9, 2022.**

We take the health, safety, and well-being of our students very seriously. As with other school immunization requirements, Section 3313.671 of the Ohio Revised Code states that students who do not provide documentation of appropriate immunization are subject to exclusion from school.

VERIFICATION OF THE IMMUNIZATION MUST BE RECEIVED AT SCHOOL USING THIS FORM OR OTHER APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION (i.e., copy of current/updated immunization record).

CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION

Name of student (please print) _____ Date of birth _____

This is to certify that the above-named student received:

MENINGOCOCCAL (MCV4)

Dose #1 _____ vaccine on (date) _____

Dose #2 _____ vaccine on (date) _____ (If dose #1 received prior to 16th birthday)

Signature of Health Care Provider _____

Address of Health Care Provider _____

Phone number _____

North Royalton High School Clinic
440-582-7827

"We Inspire and Empower Learners"





Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom

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NSG-099.RC
Rev. 05/2022



North Royalton City Schools

North Royalton Middle School

14709 Ridge Road • North Royalton, Ohio 44133

Phone (440) 582-9120 • Fax (440) 582-7229 • www.northroyaltonsd.org

To Parent/Guardian of students entering Seventh Grade in fall of 2022:

The Ohio Department of Health has updated the immunization requirements for students entering 7th grade. **All Ohio students entering 7th grade must have had a Tdap booster and one dose of Meningococcal vaccine.**

- The Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis) dose is intended to be administered as a booster dose for students who have completed the required doses of the initial series of DTap/DT/Td.
- The Tdap booster can be given regardless of the interval since the last tetanus or diphtheria-toxoid containing vaccine.
- Your student will need to show proof of having received both of these required vaccines **on or before September 6, 2022.**

We take the health, safety, and well-being of our students very seriously. As with other school immunization requirements, Section 3313.671 of the Ohio Revised Code states that students who do not provide documentation of appropriate immunization are subject to exclusion from school.

VERIFICATION OF THE IMMUNIZATION MUST BE RECEIVED AT SCHOOL USING THIS FORM OR OTHER APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION (i.e., copy of current/updated immunization record).

CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION

Name of student (please print) _____ Date of birth _____

This is to certify that the above named student received:

Tdap: _____ vaccine on _____ (date)

Meningococcal (MCV4): _____ vaccine on _____ (date)

Signature of Health Care Provider _____

Address of Health Care Provider _____

Phone number _____




< 2

 **Munchkin City**
Business chat

JAN 14, 2019 AT 1:22 PM


JAN 14, 2019 AT 10:33 AM

 Saylor doesn't have her shots?

Correct, I have exemption forms if you want them

Well I'm really disappointed that my children won't be able to attend there based off of a personal opinion. I was really excited to take them there.


 It is against our policy to keep any kids that aren't up to date on their shots.

 They did great today too. It is a bummer.

JAN 14, 2019 AT 11:24 AM

Can I ask what that policy is supported by?

JAN 14, 2019 AT 1:47 PM


 Meaning what exactly?

Since I paid the \$40 already I'd like to have the rest back for the 4 days they won't be there. So \$32

What is the reason you have that as a policy besides the fact of trying to keep children from getting sick

    Aa  

JAN 14, 2019 AT 11:52 AM

 It was a decision we came to when we decided on our policies before opening