



ADHS

## Immunization Education Course

### FAQs for Arizona Schools and School Staff Participating in the Pilot

\*\*\*If you have questions about the *Immunization Education Course* or the pilot process, please contact the Arizona Immunization Program Office at 602-364-3630.\*\*\*

➤ **What is changing with the Personal Belief Exemption (PBE) process?**

- Currently parents/guardians of children in grades K-12 may exempt their child(ren) from vaccination for personal belief reasons by signing a document provided by ADHS. As of January 1, 2019, parents/guardians in pilot schools who wish to exempt their child for personal belief reasons must take the Arizona Department of Health Services online *Immunization Education Course* in order to obtain the personal beliefs exemption form.
- The new process does not take away the right of the parent to obtain a personal beliefs exemption form; it changes the process of how the form is obtained.
- Pilot schools will no longer be responsible to provide or distribute personal beliefs exemption forms. Schools should direct parents who request an exemption to the ADHS online *Immunization Education Course* (<https://www.azdhs.gov/immunizationeducation>).

➤ **What is the purpose of the *Immunization Education Course*?**

- To provide information so that parents and guardians can make an informed decision about vaccinating their children.
- To provide parents and guardians with information about school immunization requirements, vaccine-preventable diseases, available vaccines, potential adverse outcomes from the diseases and the risks unvaccinated children pose to other children who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

➤ **When will this new change go into effect?**

- The ADHS *Immunization Education Course* will be available online as of January 1, 2019 and all pilot schools will begin the process immediately. As of January 1, 2019 only the forms printed from the ADHS *Immunization Education Course* will be accepted for personal beliefs exemptions in pilot schools.
- The personal beliefs exemption form is available online through ADHS for non-pilot schools ONLY. Pilot schools are directed to destroy or dispose of all currently held blank personal beliefs exemption forms and to direct parents to the online course instead, located at <https://www.azdhs.gov/immunizationeducation>.

- **Where do we refer parents if they ask for personal beliefs exemption form?**
  - Pilot schools should direct parents and guardians to view and complete the Arizona Department of Health Services online *Immunization Education Course* located <https://www.azdhs.gov/immunizationeducation>.
  - Parents/guardians can access the course on a personal computer at home, a computer at a local library (<http://www.publiclibraries.com/arizona.htm>) or a computer provided by the school.
  - Non-pilot schools can let parents know that the form is available on the Arizona Department of Health Services Website
  
- **What if the parent needs a personal beliefs exemption for more than one child?**
  - The ADHS *Immunization Education Course* is designed so that the parent need only go through the education course once even if they have multiple children. The parent will select and review all the vaccines that apply to their child(ren) and print one exemption form which contains the parent's name and date of completion. The parent can then make a copy of the form for each child. There is a space on the exemption form for the parent to write in the name of each child and his/her birthdate. This may be repeated for as many children as the parent wants exemptions for. The student will be exempted from all the vaccines listed on the form that bears their name.
  
- **What does the parent do once they have printed the completed personal beliefs exemption form from the *Immunization Education Course*?**
  - The parent will enter the name and birthdate of the child who is being exempted on the form. The parent will also sign and date the form and submit the form to the school/school health office.
  
- **Are copies, emails or faxes of the ADHS form acceptable?**
  - Yes. Copies, faxes, and emails of the completed ADHS *Immunization Education Course* form are acceptable provided the parent signs and dates the form.
  - If the parent chooses to send a PDF file to the school to print out, the parent will then need to come to the school to sign and date the form. The form is not valid without parent signature.
  
- **Does a parent always have to sign the exemption form?**
  - Yes. It is required that parents authenticate the form by signature and date.
  
- **When would a parent need to submit a personal beliefs exemption form to the school?**
  - Examples of when the *Immunization Education Course* will need to be completed and a personal beliefs exemption form submitted to the school include:
    - i. When a student first registers or enrolls for school at kindergarten
    - ii. When the student registers or enrolls as new to an Arizona school (coming from a different state)
    - iii. When the student changes/transfers schools within Arizona

- iv. When the vaccine requirements changes for the student's age or grade (for example, when they turn 11 years of age)
  - v. When they enter/transfer into middle school or high school.
- **If the student already has an existing personal beliefs exemption form on file with the school, and is not changing schools, does the parent need to complete the *Immunization Education Course* and submit the new form?**
    - If the student has existing personal beliefs exemption on the ADHS form version dated July 1, 2013, then that form is considered valid and can be accepted.
    - If the current exemption form is on an ADHS form dated earlier than July 1, 2013 or it is not on a valid ADHS form at all, then the parent will need to complete the *Immunization Education Course* and submit a new valid exemption form to the school.
  - **Are exemption forms required to be completed each year?**
    - No. Exemption forms do not need to be completed every year, unless the student meets one of the criteria listed above.
  - **We sometimes get homeschooled children registered to attend a class or two on-campus, such as band or Physical Education (PE). What is required of the parent?**
    - Homeschoolers who attend any classes on a school campus are usually required to register at that school and therefore are required to adhere to the Arizona [school immunization requirements](#). The parent will need to turn in a complete, up-to-date immunization record or take the ADHS *Immunization Education Course* to obtain a personal beliefs exemption form for the student.
  - **What if a parent wants a personal beliefs exemption form from a pilot school but does not want to complete the course at all?**
    - By state law, (A.R.S. §15-873) a child will not be allowed to attend school until either proof of immunization or a completed and valid exemption form is submitted to the school. Refer the parent to school administration for consideration of exclusion from school.
  - **We allowed the child to come to school not knowing they did not have all their necessary school-required vaccinations. When we discovered the oversight, we sent an immunization referral form with a due date to the parent but we still have not heard from them. What do we do?**
    - Refer the parent to school administration for consideration of exclusion from school.
  - **A student has now received one (or more) of the immunizations they were previously exempted from. What do we do?**
    - The school health office personnel or office administrative personnel must review the submitted immunization document. Once it is verified that the immunization has been obtained, the school may cross out the name of the vaccine listed on the personal beliefs exemption form, initial and date, and write in the date of the vaccination on the exemption form. The vaccination record should be kept with

the health files. School personnel should also update any other records accordingly (i.e. school software program or the Arizona School Immunization Record (ASIR)).

- **What if a child gets a vaccination for a previously exempted requirement, but still doesn't meet the school requirements (for example, they received 1 MMR, but need 2)?**
  - Parents are to submit the current, most up-to-date vaccination record to the school. A child may continue to attend school while they are in the “minimal interval” or “dose waiting” period. ADHS refers to this as conditional admission. It will be the responsibility of the school to remind the parent when the next dose is due. If the child does not receive the required dose at the appropriate time, then the child is to be excluded from school.
- **The child has a personal beliefs exemption form on file, but now the parent has taken the child to get all their vaccinations. What do we do?**
  - If the parent has provided the school with a current, up-to-date immunization record which meets the Arizona School Requirements, or meets conditional admission, then the exemption form may be withdrawn and destroyed as it is no longer applicable.
- **Can any parent or anyone in general view the ADHS *Immunization Education Course*?**
  - Yes, the link to the *Immunization Education Course* is public facing.
- **Does the parent/child's information remain confidential?**
  - Yes. In order to respect the privacy of those taking the course, the online *Immunization Education Course* does not collect or store any information.
- **What will the form from the education course look like? How will schools know it is a valid form?**
  - The form will be similar in appearance to the current personal beliefs exemption form. Exemption forms that appear to be altered in any way (such as adding information or crossing out information by hand) cannot be accepted by schools. The form will contain the following information:
    - i. ADHS logo
    - ii. ADHS language on the exemption form
    - iii. the approved exempted vaccines will be computer-generated on the form and those vaccines **not** selected will have a bold black computer-generated line through them
    - iv. the parent or guardian's name will be computer-generated/printed on the form by the computer
    - v. date of course completion will be computer-generated/printed on the form by the computer
    - vi. a space will be available for the parent to write in the name and birthdate of the child who is receiving the exemption
    - vii. a space for parent signature and date

- viii. additional language regarding exclusion from school in the case of a state or county declared outbreak and the child is not immunized against that vaccine preventable disease (VPD)
- ix. A comment box at the bottom of the form. Parents may add their handwritten comments after printing the form from the course.

➤ **Should we keep a copy of all exemption forms in the student's school health file?**

- The school should keep only the most current and applicable exemption form in the student's school health file. In the event that a new exemption form is signed, then the older exemption form can be destroyed. There is no reason to continue to keep old exemption forms in the health file if a more current or complete record is provided.

➤ **What does the school do with the immunization records and exemption forms submitted by the parent?**

- The school should make a copy of any and all immunization records and/or exemption forms and keep them in the child's school health record. If information is entered into a school immunization software program (such as SNAP, Synergy, Powerschool, etc.) the most current copies of immunization records should still be kept on file.
- Parents should be encouraged to keep a copy of all information for their personal files.
- When a child leaves a school or graduates, the immunization records are to become part of the Permanent Student Record and are to be maintained by the school and district level in perpetuity.

If you have questions about the *Immunization Education Course* or the pilot process, please contact the Arizona Immunization Program Office at 602-364-3630. We are available to assist you with any questions that may arise from the implementation of this new process.