

Policy Section: <b>STUDENTS</b>	Policy Number: <b>310</b>  Previous Policy Number: <b>001-004</b>	
Immunizations	Issue Date: August 2002	Amended Date: <b>October 2017</b>
<p>Prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to preschools, schools (kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), each student must present proof of having had the immunizations as required by Florida state law.</p> <p>There are generally recognized to be three types of exemptions sought from the schools' immunization policy – <i>religious, conscience and medical</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Religious exemptions:</i> There is nothing in Catholic moral teachings which would hold that the use of vaccines is immoral and sinful. Accepting the opinion of the much- respected <i>National Catholic Bioethics Center</i>, the Bishops of Florida take the position that, "Catholic schools or a Catholic diocese cannot grant an exemption from vaccination on <i>religious</i> grounds since the Catholic Church does not teach that the use of vaccinations...is intrinsically evil." Accordingly, requests for exemptions based on religious beliefs <u>will not be considered</u> in any Catholic schools of this diocese.</li> <li>• <i>Conscience exemptions:</i> The risk to public health in our Catholic schools has been determined to be too grave to allow exemptions from immunizations on the basis of conscience, or even for parents who erroneously believe that it would be sinful to have their children immunized. Social teachings of the Catholic Church are firm and consistent on the "<i>common good</i>" as the principle guide to reason in this regard. In justice, we consider and sometimes place the needs of others above our own. It is in that spirit that the Catholic Church recognizes a parent's right to decide what is in the best interest of their child, so long as the effects of that decision <u>only</u> impacts them or their child. It is clearly a different matter when the consequence of that decision potentially puts others at risk. The good of respecting the conscience of parents of a single child is outweighed by the harm which could come to many as a result of an exemption on the basis of conscience. Accordingly, requests for exemptions based on conscience <u>will not be considered</u> in any Catholic schools of this diocese.</li> </ul>		

- *Medical exemptions:* Medical exemptions will be considered, but only if a determination can be made by diocesan officials that, based on medical evidence, admission of the child without a vaccination would not constitute a health risk to the school community under the circumstances. If such a determination cannot be made, a medical exemption will not be granted. This exemption is reserved to Diocesan officials and is not to be granted at the parish or school administration level.