



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, this is a reminder of our long-standing diocesan policy regarding immunization standards.

Since March of 2015 the Diocese of Charleston has required that all families comply with a minimum immunization standard to attend our Catholic schools, and in the ten years since the adoption of that policy, religious exemptions have not been permitted in our diocesan and parochial schools.

Requests have been made for us to reconsider this policy, but after extensive consultation, Bishop Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS has decided to maintain our policy, not least because the Magisterium of the Church does not acknowledge a theological objection to vaccinations.

Yes, the Catholic Church has always taught that parents have primary authority over their children's health and education, and the diocese affirms this right and encourages parents to follow the dictates of their conscience, including on the acceptance of vaccinations.

However, it is also our responsibility as Church leaders and school administrators to protect the health of our school communities and all students under our care. The diocese has determined that normative vaccination requirements constitute an important part of the common good for our Catholic schools, as they safeguard some of the most vulnerable among us, and so this policy is required of all diocesan and parochial schools.

The diocese is committed to the physical and spiritual well-being of all students, faculty, and staff in our 32 Catholic schools in South Carolina, and we always seek to minister to the needs of our school communities. But we must also consider the needs of public health and the common good.

For these reasons, no new students without the proper schedule of vaccinations may be admitted to our diocesan or parochial schools for the academic year which begins in August 2025.

Should you have any questions or need clarification, please contact the Catholic Schools Office. Thank you for your continued partnership in providing safe, healthy and faith-filled school communities.