

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE OF



HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

October 21, 2021

HCS Family and Friends,

Since the Governor's announcement on October 1 mandating the COVID-19 vaccine for school attendance, we have had multiple inquiries from families seeking clarification on Heights' position. However, in the absence of a written order, we have been reluctant to make a statement. **There is no immediate impact on school operations on any of our campuses**, and rather than speculating about what may be required, it seemed prudent to wait and evaluate the exact terms of the written order. While waiting, we continue to monitor everything coming out of Sacramento, conferring with our own legal counsel, as well as collaborating with the **Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)**, their legal team, and the **Pacific Justice Institute (PJI)**, a non-profit legal defense organization in California specializing in matters that involve the exercise of religion and other civil liberties.

It's been three weeks since the Governor's press conference, and still, there is no written mandate. However, according to PJI, **it is highly anticipated that when an official Executive Order is issued, it must include a provision for personal belief exemptions**. This is important because parents opposing this vaccine for their children can simply notify the school requesting an exemption based on their own personal beliefs. To help with this effort, **PJI is crafting a letter that parents can use to invoke a personal belief exemption**. PJI is waiting for the written order to ensure that the guidance provided, including language for a personal belief exemption, appropriately addresses the parameters of the order. Parents that are interested in obtaining updates and more guidance on personal belief exemptions directly from PJI should visit their website (<https://www.pacificjustice.org>) or [click here](#). Within days of the release of a written order, PJI will provide detailed guidance to parents.

Heights Christian Schools will abide by the orders imposed upon us as long as those orders do not directly prevent us from **openly proclaiming the Gospel** message. **That's our mission**; our line in the sand if you will. These are **God's schools**, and we believe it is incredibly important for us as an organization to remain laser-focused on our mission so that we can continue to have ministry opportunities during this critical time in the lives of so many children and their families. In a short-period of time, we witnessed the detrimental impact on millions of children who were **isolated** at home and **denied** in-person instruction. We want to **stay open** and to be able to continue to bring Christ to the children and families entrusted to us, especially now!

Remaining focused on ministry and mission, **Heights Christian Schools support the right of parents to decide what is best for their children**. We support families that want to have their child vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is released for school-aged children. We also support parents not in favor of the COVID-19 vaccine who opt to submit a personal belief exemption to the school. HCS will honor personal belief exemptions that are submitted in accordance with PJI guidance. Further, HCS **will not** determine or implement requirements or protocols outside of what is required by executive order and/or state law.

It continues to be our privilege and one of our core values to partner with parents. With so much that potentially divides us, **I pray that we would stand united in Christ**, focused on HIM and all that He will do in and through us as we remain faithful. As always, we appreciate your ongoing prayers, patience, and support as we continue to monitor the everchanging developments. We will continue to communicate with families as more information is available.

- Kelly Beckert, Superintendent of Schools

Take heart! I have overcome the world. John 16:33