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Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

December 27, 2021

Norm Enfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Chino Valley Unified School District
5130 Riverside Drive
Chino, California 91710

Dear Superintendent Enfield:

Thank you for sharing your district's resolution regarding the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for public and private K-12 students. We appreciate the communication and the ongoing partnership at all levels that are necessary to maintain safe and successful schools in California.

Governor Gavin Newsom has directed the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to add the COVID-19 vaccine to the list of vaccinations already required for in-person school attendance—such as measles, mumps, and rubella—pursuant to the Health and Safety Code sections 120325 - 120380. This will be accomplished by regulations promulgated pursuant to section 120335(b)(11), which authorizes vaccine requirements for “any other disease deemed appropriate” by CDPH. This is also consistent with the overall intent of the law to achieve “eventual achievement of total immunization” against dangerous childhood diseases. (HSC section 120325(a)).

Upon full approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of a vaccine for age groups within a grade span (7-12 and K-6), CDPH will consider relevant recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians prior to implementing a requirement, as required by the Health and Safety Code section 120335(b)(11).

CDPH will then initiate the rulemaking process, which includes public comment. The regulations will take effect at the start of the following term,



meaning either January 1st or July 1st, whichever comes first. (Education Code 37200). This will also give both parents and schools sufficient time to prepare and implement. Currently, full FDA approval for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine exists for ages 16 and older. Based on current projections for full approval for ages 12+, we anticipate the requirement would apply to students in grades 7-12 at public or private schools starting on July 1, 2022. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 120338, such a requirement would include exemptions "for both medical reasons and personal beliefs."

In the face of the ongoing pandemic, the California Department of Public Health sets minimum standards for recommended and required guidance related to the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 in California schools. Our underlying goal remains to ensure that all California students have access to safe in-person instruction. While we continue to make gains in vaccinating Californians, a significant proportion of our population remains unvaccinated.

From day one, California has stepped up with policies that keep our children and school staff safe. Universal masking, combined with vaccination measures and access to regular testing, have been key to the state's nation-leading success in keeping schools open. We appreciate your perspective on adding the COVID-19 vaccine to the list of vaccines required for students to attend grades K-12 in person in California.

This strategy represents the best path for schools to protect children and school staff, ensuring that classrooms remain safe spaces for learning, and children are provided every opportunity to be successful.

Sincerely,



Tomás J. Aragón, M.D., Dr.P.H.
Director and State Public Health Officer
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