



Immunization Position Statement, 7-11-19

Susquehanna Waldorf School (SWS) abides by all laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. With respect to immunization, this means children are to be fully immunized in accordance with these laws in order to attend school. We expect our families to abide by the law when it comes to immunizations. Pennsylvania exemptions to the school laws for immunizations are: Medical reasons or religious beliefs. (*Attached is SWS's immunization policy, as found in the All School Handbook*). It is important to note that religious exemptions do not apply when an emergency or epidemic of disease is declared in an area. In that case, the State can require students with religious exemptions in all schools to stay home from school for days, weeks, or even months.

Second, despite the inaccurate claims of some articles, neither Waldorf schools, Waldorf education, nor medical practices based on the philosophy of anthroposophy are opposed to vaccinations. In fact, in April 2019, the International Federation of Anthroposophic Medical Associations stated: "*Anthroposophic Medicine fully appreciates the contribution of vaccines to global health and firmly supports vaccination as an important measure to prevent life threatening diseases. Anthroposophic Medicine is not anti-vaccine and does not support anti-vaccine movements.*" Thus, articles claiming otherwise are simply in error.

Moreover, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), our accrediting body, states: "unequivocally that our educational objectives do not include the avoidance of, or resistance to, childhood immunization. The health, safety and wellbeing of children are our forefront concerns." SWS agrees with AWSNA's position that "Waldorf schools are advocates for science and believe that scientific advancement is critical to a flourishing society. Our association is not anti-vaccine and our views do not align with the anti-vaccine movement."

Lastly, you may have read about low vaccination rates at some Waldorf and other private schools. Per AWSNA, "the majority of students in Waldorf schools across North America are immunized. Schools in our association are expected to make decisions in accordance with applicable national, state, provincial and local laws." At SWS, we are in full compliance with the state regarding our medical records.

In the event that a case of measles presents in our school or school district, SWS will follow the PA Department of Health guidelines. Students who are not immunized will not be allowed to attend school during the outbreak. Any infected student may not attend school for at least 21 days and must be under the care of a physician.

If there are questions about SWS's position, please contact the School Administrator.

Addendum: SWS All School Handbook 2018-19, Immunizations.

SWS All School Handbook 2018-19

Immunizations

Susquehanna Waldorf School complies with Pennsylvania State Immunization Law for grades kindergarten through eighth. This law mandates that all students be immunized before attending school. It also requires that schools submit immunization records to the state for tracking. The state also provides an opportunity for parents to control the immunization schedule and regime for their individual child.

Waldorf schools abide by state requirements as they pertain to immunization. We also concur that the decision to immunize is a personal one, and that it should be made by parents and their physicians. While the majority of our parents opt to immunize their children, there are some who opt not to immunize their children, or to exclude specific immunizations, or to immunize children on a slower schedule than the state code stipulates.

When students are partially immunized, or are not immunized by the beginning of the school year, parents must provide an affidavit pursuant to Pennsylvania Code 23.83 (referenced above). Any students that are partially immunized are counted as non-compliant by the state, and therefore are reflected in the overall percentage of non-immunized students on state records. Waldorf schools do all they can to ensure the safety and health of the children in our schools. We encourage all parents to consult with their physician about their personal preferences regarding immunization.

In the event of an outbreak of communicable diseases including but not limited to chicken pox, measles, mumps, or pertussis, children whose immunizations for such disease are not current may be excluded from the school and its activities for the duration of the outbreak. It is an acceptable excuse should a parent choose to keep their child at home when any infectious disease is active in the school community.

If for religious, medical, or philosophical reasons your child has not been immunized or has been partly immunized, an exemption form (available in the office) must be completed, according to PA State regulations. The completed exemption form will then be placed in your child's health file in the SWS office.

Every student must have a current, dated, signed immunization record or immunization exemption form on file.