

# Guidelines for Exemption from In-person School Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic

VERSION 2.0

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Schools and Educational centers are not only important in supporting academic and educational development, but they are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being. The school environment helps promote social and emotional skills, provides health services, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits and all within a safe environment.

It is critical to reflect on the differential impact the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated school closures have had on the wellbeing, mental health and education of our children and adolescents. In addition, families have traditionally relied on schools to provide a safe, stimulating, and enriching space for children to learn; appropriate supervision of children; opportunities for socialization; and access to school-based mental, physical, and nutritional health services. In line with the AAP, CDC and numerous other health organizations, it is important to prioritize a return to in person school to all children and adolescents. There are exceptions dictated by underlying medical conditions and they are highlighted in the below recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- All school children over the age of 12 years are recommended to be vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine such as Pfizer. Children younger than 12 years should be considered for vaccination with an mRNA vaccine when vaccination is approved for this age group.
- Children and adolescents with stable chronic disease can attend school, whether fully vaccinated or not, provided that all KHDA mandated precautions are strictly followed.
- Students with *any* of the chronic illnesses ([Appendix 1](#)) listed below can be offered online learning.
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children who are immunocompromised because of an active chronic illness or long-term immunosuppressive medication ([Appendix 2](#)) are to be *offered* online learning unless otherwise advised by the treating specialized consultant in a detailed medical report.

## APPENDIX 1 - *Examples of chronic illnesses*

- *RESPIRATORY*
  - Moderate to severe asthma - uncontrolled
  - Cystic fibrosis
  - Bronchiectasis
  - Restrictive lung disease
  
- *CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES*
  - Uncontrolled hypertension
  - Congenital heart disease
  - Cardiomyopathy
  
- *GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES*
  - Inflammatory bowel diseases
  - Chronic liver disease
  
- *RHEUMATOLOGIC AND MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES*
  - Juvenile idiopathic arthritis on systemic medication
  - Systemic lupus erythematosus
  - Juvenile Dermatomyositis (JDM)
  - Mixed connective tissue diseases
  - Scleroderma
  
- *NEPHROLOGY DISEASES*
  - Chronic renal failure
  - Lupus nephritis
  
- *HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY DISEASES*
  - Acute leukemias and lymphoma
  - Bone marrow transplantation & allogeneic cellular therapy
  - Hemoglobinopathies such as;
    - Sickle cell disease and some patients with thalassemia and inherited rare anemias who have severe iron overload

- *SOLID ORGAN TRANSPLANT on immunosuppressive therapy*
  - Kindly refer to [Appendix 2](#) for a list of drugs for immunosuppressive therapy
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- *IMMUNE DISORDERS*
  - Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g. DiGeorge, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- *METABOLIC CONDITIONS*

Children with inborn errors of metabolism may be considered for exemption from physical attendance at school if they have any of the following:

  - Significant neurodisability
  - Profound learning difficulties
  - Significant myopathy e.g. Pompe Disease
  - Disorder of intermediary metabolism with brittle metabolic control and the child experiences frequent metabolic compensation e.g. Urea Cycle Disorders

## APPENDIX 2 – *Immunosuppressive Medications*

### *High dose corticosteroids (i.e. $\geq 20$ mg prednisone, or equivalent, per day)*

- Prednisone  $\geq 20$  mg
- Methylprednisolone  $\geq 15$  mg; 500mg inj, 40mg/ml inj, 2ml
- Dexamethasone  $\geq 40$  mg

### *Alkylating agents, antimetabolites*

- Bendamustine hydrochloride 90mg/ml injection
- Cyclophosphamide 50mg tablet
- Cyclophosphamide 500mg injection
- Melphalan 2mg, 5mg tablet
- Dacarbazine 200mg injection
- Cisplatin 50mg injection
- Carboplatin 150mg injection
- Oxaliplatin injection

### *Antimetabolites*

- Capecitabine 150mg, 500mg tab
- Cytarabine 500mg IV/SC, 1g IV, 100mg Inj
- Fludarabine 50mj inj IV
- 5-Fluorouracil 50mg/ml inj, 5ml
- Gemcitabine 200mg, 1G inj
- Hydroxyurea 500mg cap
- 6-Mercaptopurine 50mg tab
- Thioguanine 40mg tab
- Ifosfamide 1 G inj IV
- Cladribine 1mg/ml inj, 10ml vial

*Transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs*

- Azathioprine 25, 50mg tab
- Lenalidomide 10mg, 15mg, 25mg cap
- Methotrexate 2.5mg tab, 5mg/2ml inj, 50mg/2ml inj, 500 mg inj, 25/ml PF inj.
- Tacrolimus 0.5mg cap, 1mg cap
- Sirolimus 1mg tab
- Cyclosporine 25, 50, 100mg cap, 100mg/ml soln. 50ml

*Cancer chemotherapeutic agents* classified as severely immunosuppressive  
(included in other categories; alkylating agents, metabolites)

*TNF blockers*

- Adalimumab 40mg inj
- Certolizumab 200mg inj.
- Etanercept 25mg inj, 50mg/ml inj.
- Golimumab 100mg inj.
- Infliximab 5mg/ml, 20ml inj.

*Other Biologic agents*

- Rituximab 10mg/ml inj, 10ml, 50ml
- Abatacept 250mg/15ml inj.
- Ixekizumab 80mg inj.
- Omalizumab 150mg inj.
- Vedolizumab 300mg inj.
- Natalizumab 300mg inj.
- Belimumab
- Ofatumumab 20mg inj.
- Secukinumab 150mg inj.
- Pertuzumab 30mg/ml inj.
- Eculizumab 10mg/ml inj
- Ustekinumab 90mg inj.
- Ado Trastuzumab 100mg, 160mg inj.
- Nivolumab 40mg, 100mg inj.
- Tocilizumab 200mg/10ml inj.
- Panitumumab 20mg/ml inj.

*Other Immunosuppressant agents*

- Tofacitinib 5mg tab
- Mycophenolate mofetil 250mg 500mg tab, 200mg/ml inj.
- Everolimus 0.5, 0.75, 10mg tab
- Baricitinib 4mg tab
- Fingolimod 0.5mg cap
- Dimethyl fumarate 120mg, 240mg cap
- Leflunomide 20mg, 100mg tab

Other Cancer chemotherapeutic agents

- Bevacizumab 100mg Inj
- Bevacizumab 400mg Inj
- Daunorubicin HCl 20mg Inj
- Docetaxel 40mg/ml Inj. IV-0.5ml
- Docetaxel 40mg/ml Inj. IV-2ml infusion
- Doxorubicin HCl 50mg Inj.
- Epirubicin HCl 50mg Inj.
- Etoposide 100mg IV Inj.
- Filgrastim 300mcg/ml Inj.1ml vial (30 million units Inj.
- Folinic acid (Calcium leucovorine) 15 mg Tab
- Folinic acid (Calcium leucovorine) 50 mg Inj. 5ml
- Idarubicin HCl 10mg Inj. IV
- Irinotecan HCl 20mg/ml concentrate for IV infusion 5ml
- Letrozole 2.5mg Tab
- Levamisole HCl 50mg Tab
- Megestrol acetate 40mg Tab
- Mitomycin C 10mg Inj.
- Mustine HCl 10mg inj
- Oncotice 120mg Inj.
- Paclitaxel 300mg Inj.(vial)
- Sodium clodronate 400mg Cap.
- Tamoxifen citrate 10mg Tab
- Thioguanine 40mg Tab
- Triptorelin 3.75mg Inj.
- Vinblastine sulphate 10mg Inj.
- Vincristine sulphate 1mg Inj.
- Vinorelbine 10mg/ml Inj.-5ml