

Policy and Handbook Assignment

Being that we are underway in what some refer to as the “flu season”, I thought it was only appropriate that one of the first policies in our district I discuss is one relating to vaccinations. Our district’s policy on immunizations provides parents and students with some recommended and mandatory vaccines that are needed for their students to attend the upcoming school year. Below is a table of that information, which is taken from our student handbooks K-12.

**IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR**

Vaccine	Grade K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Polio	4 doses	4 doses	4 doses
DTap/DPT/DT/Td	5 doses	5 doses	5 doses
Tdap	NA	1 dose for entry into grade 7	Recommended
MMR	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
Hepatitis B	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
Varicella/chickenpox	2 doses	2 doses	2 dose grade 9 1 dose grade 10-12
Meningococcal	NA	1 dose for entry into grade 7	Recommended

**North Dakota Century Code 33-06-05-01 requires any child admitted to school be required to receive the immunizations according to the recommended schedule set forth by the state department of health. Any child not adhering to the recommended schedule must provide proof of immunization or a certificate of immunization within 30 days of enrollment or be excluded from school or early childhood facility.**

A specific case that I have read that would pertain to this policy would be *Jacobson v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, in 1905. Although this case was isolated in the state of Massachusetts, the Supreme Court found that being vaccinated did not violate a person’s fourteenth amendment rights. Several decades later, the Supreme Court went further to state that “the right to practice religion freely does not include liberty to expose the community or the child to communicable disease or . . . to ill health or death,” in *Prince v. Massachusetts*, 1944. This statement and verdict support the policy enacted in my district that school can mandate specific vaccinations of their students in order to attend. The supreme court not only agrees that

this does not infringe upon a person's right, moreover, it is for the common good of the people, regardless of religious beliefs.

Another policy I wanted to focus on was the attendance of students at school. The first two years of teaching, I taught at a school that had 56% of its population below the poverty line. Due to this fact, truancy was a prominent issue. In our district we utilize a program called the School Attendance Review Board (SARB), which is a variety of agencies (i.e. Juvenile Court, Cass County Social Services, Youth Court, Youth Works, and Fargo Cass Public Health) that come together to help problem solve truancy issues using community resources. SARB contains of three tiers: Level 1 (9+ days absent), Level 2 (13+ days absent), and Level 3 is the highest level of concern. In our district when a student reaches Level 3 the district SARB will then meet with the community SARB board to gain assistance.

In the case of *Pierce v. Society of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*, in 1925, the Supreme Court of the United States set forth the Compulsory Education Act of 1922 that took effect September 1, 1926. This required parents or legal guardians to children between the ages of 8 to 16 to public schools during the current school year; otherwise, facing legal consequences. This case supports the policy set up by our district; that legal action shall be taken up by administration if truant behaviors persist.

The last policy I chose to discuss is our district's dress code policy. Our district's student dress code policy does not mandate what students must wear, instead, it informs students on what they cannot wear to school. The West Fargo Public Schools believes that adopting a district-wide dress code helps students focus more on school work, reduces discipline problems, and improve school order and safety. Some brief examples of what students may not wear are:

1. Sunglasses and/or hats worn inside the building.
2. Inappropriately short, sheer, tight, ill-fitting or low-cut clothing that bare or expose undergarments or traditionally private parts of the body including, but not limited to, the stomach, buttocks, back and chest.
3. Any advertisements, symbols, words, slogans, patches, or pictures that:
  - a. Refer to drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or weapons;
  - b. Are of a sexual nature, etc.

In the case of *Canady v. Bossier Parish School Board*, the United States Courts of Appeals found that the school district mandating students wear a school uniform was not a breach of their first amendment rights. Although this policy might be enforced in parochial schools in a stricter fashion, public schools can implement dress codes without infringing upon their student's rights. The case would then justify the policy set forth by my district, that imposing a dress code for the students is permissible.