



Indiana Department of Education

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Medical Exemption for Accountability Guidance: 2016-17 Assessments¹

INTRODUCTION

All Indiana students attending traditional public, charter or accredited nonpublic schools—including students with disabilities and non- or limited-English proficient students—are required by state and federal law to participate in Indiana’s statewide assessment program. Students who do not participate in state assessments and who do not participate in statewide assessments are included as nonparticipants when calculating participation rates for school accountability purposes. This includes students with temporary illnesses rendering the student too ill to attend school during the test window.

There are rare and unique situations in which a significant medical emergency may prohibit a student’s participation in academic activities and statewide assessments. In such instances, a student may be exempt from participation in statewide assessments and inclusion in the school’s accountability calculations. Please note that such instances are rare and unique. The general guiding rule is: **if the student is able to receive instruction (including off-site instruction), then the student is able to participate in statewide assessments.**

This document provides guidance on how a school corporation, charter school or accredited nonpublic school may request an exemption of a student’s participation in the statewide assessment due to a significant medical emergency.

REASONS FOR MEDICAL EXEMPTION

Significant Medical Emergency

In rare instances, a student may be unable to complete or participate in any part of the statewide assessments due to a significant, documented medical emergency. Examples of a significant medical emergency may include: long-term hospitalization without access to academics, severe trauma, mental health crisis with a finding that the student is dangerous to self and others or placement in hospice care. A significant medical emergency renders the student incapable of participating in any academic activities, including the statewide assessment, during a particular testing window.

Students with acute, short term minor illnesses or injuries must participate in the statewide assessment. For such students, schools can provide necessary accommodations through an emergency/temporary plan under 511 IAC 5-2-4(b) ([2016-2017 Indiana Assessment Program Manual](#) - Chapter 10/Section 7/Part C).

¹ This guidance document supersedes any previous guidance documents on Medical Exemptions for Accountability.

Medically Fragile with a Significant Medical Emergency

Medically fragile students are expected to participate in statewide assessments unless a significant and documented medical emergency exists in addition to medical fragility (see “Significant Medical Emergency” above).

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING A MEDICAL EXEMPTION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The following need to be completed by the school corporation, charter school or accredited nonpublic school for each testing window, separately. All of the following must be submitted to the Office of Student Assessment via fax at 317-233-2196 **no later than ten (10) business days after the close of the testing window:**

- The *Request for Medical Exemption* Form must be submitted and signed by school corporation, charter school or accredited nonpublic school leadership/administration in order to be considered for review. The school corporation/charter school/accredited nonpublic school should retain a copy of this form.
- Notify the parent/legal guardian of the student that a request has been made for a Medical Exemption for that student. The notice should include an explanation of the medical exemption and why the school is seeking the exemption for the student. The school corporation/charter school/accredited nonpublic school should retain a copy of this notice.
- Obtain a completed *Recommendation for a Medical Exemption for Accountability* form from a licensed medical provider or physician. The school corporation/charter school/accredited nonpublic school should retain the completed form for at least five years from the date of the test.
- Compile sufficient, compelling evidence and documentation to support the request for a medical exemption.

Upon receipt of a medical exemption request, the Department will do the following:

- Notify the school of the receipt of the medical exemption request.
- Convene an internal review team to determine whether the request sufficiently demonstrates a significant medical emergency that necessitates a medical exemption for accountability. Each review will be completed on a case-by-case basis.
- Upon determination, the Department will notify the school corporation/charter school/accredited nonpublic school of the determination via email, and provide further instruction if necessary.

A student will only be exempt from accountability if the Department approves the medical exemption request. Additionally, approval for an exemption from one test does not necessarily mean that a request for an exemption from the other test will be automatically approved. Any students that were denied the medical exemption shall be included in the school’s accountability calculations for participation.

If you have questions, please contact Karen Stein, Special Programs Assessment Specialist at kstein@doe.in.gov, or 317-232-9050.