

SAMPLE RESPONSE #2

Mandatory Vaccinations for Dangerous Diseases

Mandatory vaccinations became a hot topic for many Americans in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although vaccinations had been required in most states, not all citizens had been given the vaccine. Private businesses can make vaccinations mandatory to their employees unless a health waiver has been provided. However, a more specific argument focuses on whether all school children should be required to get certain vaccinations and what the consequences should be if they are not. There are multiple perspectives on the debate of mandatory school vaccination for school aged children. The majority of people opt to vaccinate their children. Some families choose not to vaccinate for moral or health-related reasons. School age students should not be required to be vaccinated, but it should be highly recommended. To ensure the safety of all children, students who do cannot show evidence of having been vaccinated should be separated from the general population of vaccinated children.

Of the three perspectives given on this topic, the second perspective presents the most balanced option. There are many good reasons that vaccinations are healthy for a population. Doctors know that by getting vaccines, patients reduce the possibility of contracting a serious illness or if the disease is actually contracted, the case will be less dangerous. They also know that diseases like smallpox and polio have almost been permanently removed thanks to vaccines. According to the second perspective, “children who opt not to be vaccinated should be segregated from children who have been vaccinated;” however, if we operate under the idea that most children will still get vaccinated, only a small group will be affected by the separation. Separation doesn’t necessarily mean being placed a separate room. It could be that unvaccinated students are required to wear masks and eat at a different lunch period. Students will still have access to the same quality education. As we learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, outdoor activities pose less of a threat to germ transmission, so students playing together at recess could still be an option.

Science has proven that communities that have high rates of vaccinations also benefit from “herd” immunity, which is important because it ensures that when an infection cannot spread from one person to another, then everyone benefits whether everyone is vaccinated or not.

However, there are communities and groups of citizens who resist the idea of vaccinations completely. The arguments are both moral and health-related. The first objection is that mandatory vaccination is coercive. If a vaccine is mandated, then the individual is expected to surrender their autonomy and obey the requirement in order to attend school, accept a job, or work with the general public in some capacity. In addition to being coercive, vaccinations, like all medical procedures, require informed consent. Required vaccinations remove that option from parents and students. Another criticism is that mandatory vaccinations are discriminatory. Whatever a parent’s objection, if vaccines are required, then the reason for refusing is not valid; therefore, because of this, if a parent were afraid that a vaccination might create an additional health problem for their child, their objection would not be relevant. Penalties for refusing a vaccine also violate a person’s civil freedoms—the rights to liberty, privacy, and control over their own bodies.

Although school age students should not be required to be vaccinated, it should be highly recommended. Those students who are not vaccinated should be separated from the general population of vaccinated children. Making this a recommendation may promote voluntary vaccinations and naturally raise “herd immunity.” People generally do not like being told what to do, but sometimes it is easier to catch a fly with honey rather than vinegar. Parents want what is best for their children and will do whatever they can to ensure their health and safety.