

Petition to End Student Segregation, Exclusion and Discrimination
Based on Vaccination Status

DRAFT VII

October 14, 2021

To: Boston College High Board of Trustees:

Rev. Michael McFarland, SJ <i>Trustee, Chair</i>	The Honorable Serge Georges, Jr. <i>Trustee, Vice-chair</i>	Grace Cotter Regan <i>Trustee Ex-officio</i> President of BC High
Martin Dunn DMD <i>Trustee</i>	Rich Davey <i>Trustee</i>	Anthony I. Day <i>Trustee</i>
Bob Forman <i>Trustee</i>	E. Fritz Friedman <i>Trustee</i>	Stephen Fulton <i>Trustee</i>
Brian Lee <i>Trustee</i>	John Lydon <i>Trustee</i>	Matt Maiona <i>Trustee</i>
June Matte <i>Trustee</i>	Ifeanyi Obukwelu <i>Trustee</i>	Kevin R. Powers, J.D. <i>Trustee</i>
Michael Ray <i>Trustee</i>	Jack Shields <i>Trustee</i>	Marty St. George <i>Trustee</i>

From: Concerned Boston College High Parents of Students, Grades 7 – 12

Topic: Petition to End Student Segregation, Exclusion and Discrimination Based on
Vaccination Status

We are petitioning the Board of Trustees to take immediate action to end Boston College (BC) High's policy to segregate, exclude and discriminate against students based on vaccination status.

As concerned parents, we became aware of this policy three weeks prior to the start of school, when we read in Adam Lewis' letter to parents, on August 11, 2021¹, and again on August 31², his announcements:

"Unvaccinated students are required to eat behind plexiglass at all times, and there will be a room with plexiglass-equipped tables set up accordingly,"

and,

"Vaccinations are required for students to be involved in athletics and co-curricular activities."

In short, the social-emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of unvaccinated students at BC High are being wholly denied and neglected.

While we understand that the stated goal of these policies by BC High leadership is to mitigate the spread of COVID and to reduce the likelihood of quarantine, we believe that these measures are having serious, detrimental effects on unvaccinated – as well as vaccinated – students. Alienation, fear, and anxiety have resulted from the unequal treatment of select boys, creating a destructive air of mistrust within the student body.

We believe that it is short-sighted and developmentally harmful to create a school environment in which students regard classmates as potential biohazards, and where teachers and staff are emboldened to openly single boys out in service of these excessive separation measures. Prohibiting unvaccinated students from participating in athletic and co-curricular activities, such as football, soccer, hockey, baseball, Model UN, etc., will significantly impair and disadvantage their competitive applications to colleges and universities. Indeed, as one of the most highly regarded Catholic high schools in the Boston area – one steeped in academic excellence, proudly touting careful attention to the character development of young men – it is impossible to conclude that the long-term, punitive consequences of these practices on students' future academic and professional opportunities has not been considered by BC High leadership.

We ask you, the BC High Board of Trustees, how you can condone teaching impressionable and captive young men to discriminate against their brothers. In fact, the very motto of BC High has been to develop "men for others," although quite the opposite is playing out in the hallways of the school. You must ask yourselves, is there any justification, ever, in which discriminatory behavior would be tolerated at BC High against one child, 50 children, or 100 children?

Governing Authorities Do Not Support Discrimination:

We have thoroughly reviewed the most recently published guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) ³, The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) ³, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) ⁴, The Archdiocese of Boston⁵ and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) ⁶, and not one report has a recommendation to segregate students or exclude them from activities based on vaccination status.

Most importantly, the CDC ⁶ explicitly states that there should be no discrimination against students who are not fully vaccinated:

“Cohorting people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated into separate cohorts is not recommended. It is a school’s responsibility to ensure that cohorting is done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking, as described in the U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1. ⁶”

We challenge the BC High leadership to produce a single statement from the most current DESE or CDC guidelines that justifies the discrimination of students on the basis of vaccination.

Peered-Reviewed Scientific Studies Do Not Support Segregation and Exclusion:

According to published, peer-reviewed, scientific studies from the CDC⁷ – as well as those from the UK⁸ and Israel⁹ (the latter two are the most vaccinated countries in the world) – there is no scientific basis upon which to segregate students and exclude them from activities based on vaccination status. COVID-vaccinated individuals carry the same viral load when symptomatic as unvaccinated individuals^{7,8}. Therefore infection rates and transmission rates are very similar among vaccinated and unvaccinated populations^{7,8}.

Because the COVID vaccines cannot prevent infection or transmission of the virus, and only promise to reduce one’s risk of serious illness^{7,8,9}, the only person who can benefit from the vaccination is the vaccinated individual. It protects no one else! It is therefore a false statement written by Mr. Lewis to a concerned parent that,

“Vaccination is the best and most effective means of reducing the spread of COVID-19 and returning our school to a sense of normalcy.”

Thus, denying unvaccinated students access to athletics and co-curriculars, and segregating those same students from peers during lunch, is a practice without scientific justification. Furthermore, it finds no favor from a single governmental, educational, or medical authority. The recognition of these facts necessarily leads one to ask the obvious question: Why? Why would BC High leadership impose baseless practices that

undermine their stated commitment to create and uphold an inclusive school community? While none among us want to believe our working answer to that question, it would seem that these aggressive tactics are being used to coerce parents into submission.

Sadly, this strategy has been at least somewhat “successful.” It has led some otherwise discerning parents to vaccinate their son(s) – against their better judgment and, worse, against their conscience. Many parents in the BC High community have expressed a shared concern over these discriminatory practices, but feel too intimidated to include their names on this petition for fear of retribution against their son(s). Furthermore, stories among BC High families are circulating of student depression and anxiety resulting from these exclusionary measures.

Is this the legacy that BC High leadership – and the Board – wants for its students?

BC High has been given an incredible opportunity to model faith and strength in the face of adversity during this extraordinary time in history; but has instead chosen a fear-based approach that sows division and cowardice.

Families have chosen your school to partner with in the development of our sons, and have made many sacrifices along the way to do so. But as parents, we have the ultimate God-given privilege and responsibility to make decisions on behalf of our sons. And, indeed, our right to opt out of medical interventions such as vaccination is federally guaranteed (i.e., informed consent).

We have witnessed the leadership at BC High’s blatant denial of the facts – all of which are publicly available and included within this petition. Even the published data from the CDC¹⁴ that no child (i.e., ZERO) ¹⁴ has to date died of COVID in the state of Massachusetts (from a total ~1.4 million children¹⁵), and that 439¹⁴ have died nationally out of ~73 million children¹⁶, appears to be irrelevant to the school’s leaders. We did a cursory poll among parents with students in other schools on the South Shore, both public and private, and found no other school imposing discriminatory mandates on their students. Why does BC High insist that a well-informed parent consent to the COVID vaccine for their son, knowing very well that 19 children¹⁷ have already died after being vaccinated and nearly 20,000¹⁸ have been injured requiring medical intervention (including hundreds of previously healthy athletic boys now inflicted with lifelong heart¹⁹ and other autoimmune problems), as reported in the US Government’s official Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)?

Religious, Ethical and Moral Considerations:

Many of us have sincerely held religious beliefs/convictions that prevent us and our families from receiving the COVID vaccine. The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC)²⁰, whose directors include Cardinals O’Malley, Dolan and DiNardo, has stated:

“If any institution mandates COVID-19 vaccination, the NCBC strongly urges robust, transparent, and readily accessible exemptions for medical, religious, and conscience reasons,”

and,

“Catholic institutions, in particular, should respect the decisions of people to decline the use of vaccines dependent on abortion-derived cell lines.”

We want to respectfully remind the Board of its obligation to uphold the core values²¹ of the school and to ensure the protection of those time-honored values – without exception. It is intellectually dishonest to avoid content-driven conversations from behind the tired banner of false scientific claims. We reject any notion of “protection” for students and staff that trades dignity for discrimination. On your BC High website, under ‘About us,’ ‘Values,’ you write:

“You’ll question the systems that elevate some people while oppressing others, and you will work within a community of fellow justice-seekers toward a more ethical and inclusive world.”

And,

“As a Jesuit, Catholic school, we are committed to justice, equity, and inclusion as they are essential to meaningful learning, personal growth, and loving relationships.”

And,

“Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to our mission.”

And,

“The goal is to prepare students to lead healthy, well-balanced lives and as a way to strengthen their existing relationship with themselves, and in turn, with others.”

Our Ask of the Board of Trustees:

In the weeks before gathering as a unified group, many of us independently corresponded and spoke with the BC High leadership; but no facts or reason could sway them. This has left us with no choice but to petition you, the Board of Trustees, to act on our behalf, the behalf of our children, and the behalf of every BC High student. The Board of Trustees has a responsibility to ensure that the leadership of BC High not enact discriminatory policies – policies with serious short- and long-term consequences. The adverse psychological effects on the children, as well as the negative impact on their future academic and professional careers, cannot be overstated. We are appealing to you to address this matter urgently to prevent any further damage being perpetrated against our sons and, by extension, the entire student body.

It is our sincere intention and prayer that BC High not join those in history who have acted in morally reprehensible ways under the guise of virtue and in the name of public good.

Please signal your response in writing by the end of the day, Wednesday October 20, 2021, to our parent representatives.