

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

10 July 2020

Transmitted by email:

U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter dated 26 November 2019 inquiring whether a Bahá'í is required to obey civil laws mandating vaccination. We have been asked to convey the following and regret the delay in our response because of the pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre.

A fundamental Bahá'í principle is loyalty and obedience to government. As Shoghi Effendi explained in a letter dated 21 December 1948 written on his behalf to an individual believer, “We must obey in all cases except where a spiritual principle is involved, such as denying our Faith.” If a Bahá'í is faced with a governmental mandate of vaccination, the Bahá'í writings would not provide him or her justification for refusing to comply with such a legal requirement; therefore, a religious exemption could not be claimed. Of course, if the law itself provided another applicable exemption, a believer would be free to decide, including for family members for whom he or she is responsible, whether to invoke such an exemption.

Be assured of the supplications of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines that you and your children may be surrounded by the tender mercies of the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat