



Important Information Regarding the Alameda County Science Fair (ACSEF)

- 1.) ACSEF has agreed to accept the Diocese application paperwork in lieu of the ACSEF application. Alameda County SEF's SRC/IRB safety review committee continues to require pre – experimental approval for certain types of projects.
- 2.) ACSEF's middle school IRB/SRC is available to give teachers guidance if they are not sure if a project falls into the pre-approval groups below or not. All teachers or students need to do is send us an email with a brief description of the project and we can give them a prompt answer at alamedacountysef@gmail.com with **Diocese** in the subject line. **Please make sure if the student is emailing us that they cc the teacher's email so we can reply to all with our answers.**
- 3.) The Diocese project paperwork with detailed procedures and materials lists should be mailed to ACSEF prior to start of experimentation if the student projects involve any of the following:
 - a. Human subjects (the following are **exempt from pre-approval**: observation of human behavior that does not involve collecting any personal information such as surveys or do not involve any manipulation of the human behavior) **exempt example**: observing general behaviors in the lunch line.

Not exempt example: Students are asked to take any form of a test as part of the experiment such as exercising, vision, hearing, sensory, agility, math, spelling, answer a survey etc. **These experiments CAN be done** but students need pre-approval and **must include with their Diocese application samples** of the test questions or survey questions and lots of details about any testing they are asking humans to do. And they must state in their procedure; **“All data will be de-identified. Human subjects will be identified by numbers only. Surveys and other data will be shredded following the experiment. Sponsoring teacher or parent/guardian supervision will be provided at all times”**
 - i. **ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED: humans tasting or eating anything whatsoever.**
 - b. Vertebrate animals (the following are **exempt from pre-approval**: observation of the animals in their natural habitat without any attempt whatsoever to manipulate their diet, behavior, habitat etc.) **exempt example**: observing the natural interaction of dogs in a dog park, watching how many times a goldfish breathes when the light is on versus off.

Not exempt example: Students offer food choices to an animal, or change the habitat (add heat to one side of a cage and light to another).

- c. Potentially hazardous projects such as using lab grade chemicals (chemicals used in school that have MSDS) or prescription meds, projects that involve potential for electrical shock, cuts, burns, falls from height over 6', class II and above lasers,)...kids can get around lots of scrutiny if they make sure to include these statements in their procedure as appropriate to their particular experiment:
 - i. If using electricity: **“The maximum voltage of the device (insert name of device) is (insert voltage)”**. All electrical cords will be UL approved and checked for exposed wires prior to experimentation.
 - ii. If using lab grade chemicals: **“All chemicals will be used and disposed of according to the attached MSDS”**. If lab grade chemicals ARE used, the teacher should photocopy the MSDS and attach to the application.
 - iii. Use this statement for ALL potentially hazardous projects regardless of the nature of the project: **“Sponsoring teacher or parent/guardian supervision will be provided at all times”**.
- d. Microbes (the following are **exempt from pre-approval**: baker's or brewer's yeast, mushrooms and amoebzoa -slime mold, commercially-available color change coliform water test kits, decomposition of vertebrate organisms (such as in forensic projects), studies with microbial fuel cells, research using manure for composting, fuel production and other non-culturing experiments, studies involving protists or archaea. Studies of mold growth on food items if the experiment is terminated at the first evidence of mold. Also exempt are studies using Lactobacillus, Bacillus thuringiensis, nitrogen-fixing, oil-eating, algae-eating bacteria). **Exempt example**: collecting water samples and determining if they contain coliform bacteria (must be grown on special non culturing media such as Coli-scan).
 - i. **For ALL microbial projects that are NOT exempt** and will need pre-approval the students must have these statements in their procedure:
 1. All culturing will be done at school and not at home. Students will wear protective latex gloves when experimenting and all microbial containers or petri dishes will be sealed with tape or petri film after inoculation and throughout the experiment and disposal. Disposal will include depositing all closed culturing containers and petri dishes into a 10% bleach solution within a gallon size zip lock baggie then thrown into the school hazardous waste container. All lab work surfaces will be wiped with 10% bleach solution.
 2. **“Sponsoring teacher supervision will be provided at all times”**.

When the teachers have the paperwork for projects needing pre-approval ready they should make a photocopy of each page and then they can package all of them together or individually. Please mail these to ACSEF as early as September 15th, but no later than December 30th for pre-approval.

Mailing address: ACSEF PO Box 668 Pleasanton, CA 94566

Diocese students should **NOT** register ONLINE until after the Diocese fair unless the teachers choose to have all students enter ACSEF as part of their science program.