



Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

Statement and Objectives



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Table of Contents

Policy Statement and Objectives	3
Collect, record and hold vaccination information	4
Prevention of entry to premises	4
Personal protective equipment	4
Exceptional circumstances	4
Arranging a COVID-19 Vaccination	5
Providing Proof of Vaccination	5
Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccinations	5
Un-vaccinated Workers Without an Exemption	6
Record Keeping	7
New Employees	7
Related Documents	7
References	7

Policy Statement and Objectives

The Victorian Government has released the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Directions (No 8) (Health Directions).

These Health Directions require the schools in Victoria to take steps to ensure staff are vaccinated in order to limit the spread of SARS-Cov-2 in school settings, and effectively require that staff (unless exempt):

- receive a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination by 25 October 2021; and
- are fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021

Compliance with the Health Directions is mandatory under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic). Failure to do so is an offence.

The Kilmore International School (**the School**) is committed to the health and safety of its staff, students (including boarding) and broader school community, which includes preventing the spread of diseases such as COVID-19 on campus and amongst members of the community.

There is a high risk of COVID-19 infection in the context of a public-facing school environment which requires staff – during on campus learning – to regularly come into contact each day with a large section of the school community (including staff, students and parents), having regard to the increased rates of community transmission of the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, as well as the increased health risks of the virus to people who might not previously have been considered to be vulnerable.

The School will comply with the Health Directions.

This policy accordingly sets out the measures that the School is taking to ensure that staff are vaccinated in compliance with the Health Directions, and outlines the limited exemptions which are available.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members and volunteers in the school community.

Definitions

COVID-19 vaccination means a COVID-19 vaccine approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in Australia, or where a person has been vaccinated overseas, a World Health Organisation-COVAX approved COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech (COMIRNATY), AstraZeneca and Spikevax (Moderna) vaccines are approved for use in Australia.

A person is **fully vaccinated against COVID-19** if the person has received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccination in accordance with the current Department of Health advice.

A **school** includes a boarding house, childcare or early childhood service, and outside school hours care service.

A **staff member** includes:

- any person employed to work in a school (including teachers, early childhood educators and educational support staff);
- a person contracted to work at a school and who will or may be in close proximity to children, students or staff, whether or not engaged by the School (including casual relief teachers, Breakfast Club suppliers, IT personnel, NDIS providers and auditors, but excluding delivery personnel or contractors);

- staff of any other entity who attend a school;
- volunteers that attend a school and work in close proximity to children, students or staff (including parent helpers); and
- students on placements at a school.

The Health Directions

The following is a summary of the Health Directions which apply to The Kilmore International School.

Collect, record and hold vaccination information

The Health Directions require the School to collect, record and hold vaccination information about any staff member who is, or may be, scheduled to work at a school.

Vaccination information includes:

- The staff member's vaccination status.
- If a staff member is unvaccinated, whether the staff member has a booking to receive at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination by 25 October 2021.
- If a staff member is unvaccinated and in self-quarantine, whether the staff member has a booking to receive at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination within 7 days of the end of the period of self-quarantine
- If a staff member is partially vaccinated, whether that staff member has a booking to be fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021.
- If the staff member has a medical contraindication exemption, clarification from a medical practitioner that the staff member is unable, due to a medical contraindication, to receive a dose, or a further dose, of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Prevention of entry to premises

The Health Directions require the School to take all reasonable steps to ensure that, on or after 18 October 2021, a staff member who is unvaccinated does not enter, or remain on, the premises of a school for the purposes of work.

If the School does not hold vaccination information about a staff member, the School must treat the staff member as if the staff member is unvaccinated. The only exceptions to this are as follows:

- The staff member has a booking to receive the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination by 25 October 2021. In this case, the staff member must wear, at all times while on the School's premises, personal protective equipment that includes at a minimum, a surgical mask and face shield.
- The staff member is unable to be partially vaccinated before 25 October 2021 because they were in self-quarantine under the Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Directions, and has a booking to receive the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination within 7 days of the end of the period of self-quarantine.
- The staff member has a medical exemption.

Exceptional circumstances

The Health Directions specify limited exceptional circumstances in which the School is not required to comply with the above obligations.

These include where a staff member is required to attend the School's premises and carry out assessments of an oral or performance examination as part of the Victorian Certificate of Education or International Baccalaureate, or work as a venue coordinator for any such examinations.

Exceptional circumstances must be approved by the School, and the relevant staff member's presence on the School's premises will be only for the period of time necessary to respond to the relevant circumstance.

Arranging a COVID-19 Vaccination

To enable the School to comply with the Health Directions, staff are encouraged to take the following steps (if they have not done so already):

- If relevant, seek medical advice regarding the COVID-19 vaccination, as it relates to you.
- Where you do not fall within one of the medical contraindication exemptions outlined below, make appointments to receive your first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccination.
- If you have trouble making an appointment, please contact your manager.
- When you receive your first and your second COVID-19 vaccination dose, ensure that you keep a record of these.

The **Kilmore International** School will support current employees to get vaccinated through the following initiatives:

- Allowing employees paid time off to attend an appointment to receive their COVID-19 vaccination upon provision of proof of this appointment.
- Vaccination clinics were scheduled, the dates and locations which were notified to staff.

Staff can access COVID-19 vaccinations at various locations including vaccination hubs, roving clinics, general practices, some pharmacies. The dedicated **COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline 1800 020 080** (select option 2) can answer any questions you may have about vaccination and can help you book a vaccination appointment. Vaccinations are free, and you do not need a Medicare card to make an appointment or receive the vaccination.

Providing Proof of Vaccination

Evidence of vaccination, or a booking to receive a vaccination, must be submitted to the Risk and Compliance Officer by close of business on 17 October 2021 and can include:

- A vaccination certificate or other evidence from a vaccine provider.
- An immunisation history statement which can be accessed from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.
- A statement of your vaccination history which you can request from the Australian Immunisation Register.
- A record from a health practitioner.

Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccinations

If a staff member believes they are medically exempt from the vaccination requirements set out in this policy, for a reason specified in the Health Directions, or that other exceptional circumstances apply, they must promptly notify Dr. Peter Cooper, Principal, and in any event by close of business on 17 October 2021.

The Health Directions recognise the following medical contraindications to the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine:

- anaphylaxis after a previous dose;
- anaphylaxis to any component of the vaccine, including polysorbate or polyethylene glycol;

in relation to AstraZeneca:

- history of capillary leak syndrome; or
- thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after a previous dose;

in relation to Comirnaty or Spikevax:

- myocarditis or pericarditis attributed to a previous dose of either Comirnaty or Spikevax; or

the occurrence of any other serious adverse event that has:

- been attributed to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by an experienced immunisation provider or medical specialist (and not attributed to any another identifiable cause); and
- been reported to State adverse event programs and/or the Therapeutic Goods Administration;

If a staff member has a medical exemption, they should provide the School with a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner:

- certifying that the staff member is unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccination because they have a medical contraindication;
- identifying the relevant medical exemption;
- indicating whether the medical exemption will permanently or temporarily prevent COVID-19 vaccination; and
- if the medical exemption only temporarily prevents a COVID-19 vaccination, specifying when the staff member may be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

A staff member who is pregnant may provide evidence to the School that a registered medical practitioner has advised against vaccination due to the pregnancy, and specifying when the staff member may be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Please note that pregnancy is not specifically recognised as a medical exemption under the Health Directions.

If a registered medical practitioner certifies that a staff member has a temporary medical exemption, which makes them unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, any exemption based on this only applies for the period specified in the medical certificate provided by the medical practitioner. If the medical reason continues beyond that period, the staff member must provide a new medical certificate from their doctor, regarding the medical exemption.

The Health Directions do not contain an exemption for a staff member who objects to the COVID-19 vaccination on personal, political or religious grounds.

Un-vaccinated Workers Without and Exemption

If a staff member is not exempt but chooses not to be vaccinated, the staff member must promptly notify Dr. Peter Cooper, Principal, and in any event by close of business on 17 October 2021.

Staff members who are not exempt, and who choose not to have a COVID-19 vaccination by the deadline(s) set out above, will not be permitted to work or to attend School premises to perform the duties associated with their role. This may mean that the staff member is initially suspended from work without pay.

If the staff member is an employee, they will be provided with an opportunity to discuss their circumstances with their manager and any alternative options which may be available, including:

- alternative work arrangements, subject to the operational needs of School; and
- the staff member taking accrued annual or long service leave.

Any decision regarding alternative options will be at the absolute discretion of School, subject to its legal obligations. Staff who choose not to have a COVID-19 vaccination need to be mindful that this may ultimately result in dismissal.

Record Keeping

The School is collecting vaccination information to:

- comply with the Health Directions;
- ensure that School knows who is eligible to attend work under this policy; and
- enable School to manage the risks to staff, students and the school community arising from COVID-19, including preparing for any possible future outbreaks.

When collecting vaccination information, the School will comply with its *Privacy Policy*, which is available through CompliSpace the School's program link here: [Policy](#) or by contacting the Risk and Compliance Officer.

Vaccination information will be securely stored and kept confidential and will only be accessible to people who are required to access it. You can request to access your vaccination record information at any time and can also request that any relevant updates are made to it.

The School is required to provide access to vaccination information to an Authorised Officer under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic) if requested to demonstrate compliance with the Health Directions.

New Employees

Staff engaged after this policy is implemented will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before starting their employment/engagement.

Related Documents

Privacy Policy
COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Contraindication Form
Immunisation (Staff) Policy

References

Legislation

COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Directions (No 8).
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic).

Links

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?
Australian Immunisation Register
COVID-19 vaccine information in your language
The Fair Work Ombudsman's guidance on COVID-19 vaccinations

Date: 18/10/21

Date for review: 1/01/22