

Organisation Policy: Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

1.05.1 COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Heart Kids NZ COVID-19 Vaccination Policy sets out the obligations and responsibilities of all workers covered by this Policy with regard to the Medsafe-approved vaccines for COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

Vaccination and COVID-19

Vaccination is one of the most successful public health interventions of the past 200 years. The low incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases in New Zealand attests to the effectiveness of immunisation services, programmes and policies. Since the introduction of routine immunisations across the globe in the 1950s, death or disability from vaccine-preventable diseases has reduced dramatically.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and is responsible for the outbreak that began in December 2019 and progressively became a global pandemic affecting more than 120 countries. Since that time, vaccines have been developed which have been shown to be effective in reducing COVID-19 virus transmission and protecting vaccinated individuals from severe consequences of COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants including the Delta variant currently circulating in New Zealand. Clinical studies have shown that the Comirnaty (Pfizer/BioNTech) vaccine (which is currently the only vaccine offered in New Zealand) is, after two doses and on the evidence provided, 93.7% effective against the Covid-19 alpha variant and 67% effective against the Delta variant.

A safe and effective vaccine is only one part of keeping the community safe and healthy. This means we must continue to apply other COVID-19 control measures such as physical distancing, mask wearing, good hygiene and regular cleaning and maintenance, in addition to vaccination.

WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

This Policy applies to all Heart Kids NZ workers, and to the extent relevant, all volunteers, consultants and contractors who have been engaged to provide services on behalf of Heart Kids NZ.

This Policy applies subject to any New Zealand government law, regulation, or legislative instrument (including public health orders).

All workers are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with this Policy and its requirements.

Heart Kids NZ is responsible for managing procedures associated with ensuring that workers are informed about, understand and adhere to this Policy.

MANDATORY VACCINATION

Consistent with its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Heart Kids NZ has conducted risk assessments in relation to the work undertaken by Heart Kids NZ workers.

Having conducted these health and safety risk assessments, Heart Kids NZ considers that the risks to Heart Kids workers and other persons (including Heart Kids members) of contracting COVID-19 is sufficiently serious that it needs to implement a mandatory vaccination requirement for Heart Kids workers.

Meaning of "vaccinated"

"Vaccinated" means a person has received all of the doses of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines specified below:

- 2 doses of Comirnaty (also known as Pfizer/BioNTech); or
- 2 doses of AstraZeneca; or
- 2 doses of Moderna; or
- 1 dose of Janssen; or
- 1 dose of AstraZeneca and 1 dose of Comirnaty; or
- 1 dose of Moderna and 1 dose of Comirnaty.

Getting the vaccine

Vaccination during working hours

If workers are unable to report for and undergo vaccination outside working hours, Heart Kids NZ will allow workers to report for and undergo vaccination during their working hours without using annual leave or losing pay. Heart Kids NZ will also allow workers to access vaccination for their dependents during working hours, without using annual leave or losing pay.

Timeframe

Existing workers

All existing Heart Kids NZ workers must have received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by **1 December 2021**.

All existing Heart Kids NZ workers must have received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine (with the exception of any worker who has received 1 dose of Janssen) by **1 January 2022**.

New workers

Heart Kids NZ requires all new workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. This requirement will be discussed prior to any employment or contract services offer being given so the potential new worker can make the decision before accepting a role at Heart Kids NZ. The COVID-19 vaccination requirement will be included in the terms of Heart Kids NZ employment agreements and services agreements.

New workers who are not vaccinated must have their first dose of a recognised COVID-19 vaccine before starting work, and their second dose within 35 days after that date on which they started work.

Providing proof of vaccination

To establish that they have received a vaccination, Heart Kids NZ workers must present written evidence of immunisation.

This written evidence can be a copy of either:

- a) purple vaccination card(s) demonstrating receipt of Doses 1 and 2 of the Comirnaty (Pfizer/BioNTech) COVID-19 vaccine (or receipt of all required doses of another vaccination series subsequently approved by the New Zealand government or the World Health Organisation);
- b) vaccination confirmation letter from the Ministry of Health;
- c) certified copy of the individual's "My Covid Record" platform maintained by the Ministry of Health; or
- d) other written or electronic evidence (at Heart Kids NZ' discretion).

EXEMPTIONS FROM HEART KIDS NZ COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

Given the health and safety risk assessments Heart Kids NZ has conducted and the purpose and scope of the Heart Kids NZ COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, there will be very limited (if any) circumstances in which exemptions will be granted. Exemptions from the Heart Kids NZ COVID-19 Vaccination Policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any existing Heart Kids NZ worker seeking an exemption from this policy must make an application to the Heart Kids NZ Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible, and in any event, no later than **19 November 2021**. The application must include:

- The worker's detailed reasons for seeking the exemption; and
- In the case of an application for an exemption for medical reasons, supporting medical evidence from a suitably qualified health practitioner.

If a Heart Kids NZ worker, consultant, or contractor is provided an approved exemption from the requirement to vaccinate against COVID-19 under this Policy, the worker will be required to comply with any additional controls communicated to them as part of the exemption or thereafter (e.g. regular testing and other non-pharmacological risk management measures such as mask wearing, physical distancing, and restriction of movement).

If an exemption application is refused, the Heart Kids NZ worker must receive the COVID-19 vaccine doses by the dates set out in the timeframe section of this policy.

Refusal to be vaccinated or to disclose vaccination status

If a Heart Kids NZ worker, consultant, or contractor refuses to be vaccinated against COVID-19, or refuses to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status by **1 December 2021**, Heart Kids NZ can and will make a reasonable assumption that they are unvaccinated.

If by **1 December 2021** the Heart Kids NZ worker, consultant, or contractor has:

- not received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination, or
- has not disclosed their COVID-19 vaccination status, or
- has not received an exemption from the Heart Kids NZ COVID-19 Vaccination Policy,

Heart Kids NZ will provide the worker with four weeks' notice of termination of employment (or more, if their employment agreement or contract for services provides for more notice). The worker will continue to work and be paid for working during their notice period. The worker will be required to comply with any additional controls communicated to them to protect Heart Kids NZ workers and members during this time, e.g. regular testing and other non-pharmacological risk management measures such as mask wearing, physical distancing, and restriction of movement.

HANDLING AND STORAGE OF YOUR VACCINATION INFORMATION

All information collected, used and stored under this Policy will be handled in accordance with the Heart Kids NZ Confidentiality Policy and the New Zealand Privacy Act 2020.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

- 1.0 Health and Safety
- 1.05 Communicable Diseases
- 1.08 First Aid
- 1.10 Medical Incapacity
- 3.02 Sick leave

RELEVANT LAW

- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Where to go if you have questions:

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines

www.covid19.govt.nz

www.immune.org.nz

RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY	HEAD OF FAMILY SUPPORT
POLICY APPROVED BY	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
EFFECTIVE DATE	8 November 2021
DATE OF NEXT POLICY REVIEW	31 st March 2022