

memo



To All Workers in Catholic Education South Australia

From Susan Young

Date 23 November 2022

Re COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Consultation Outcome and Policy Approval

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Dear Colleagues

This memo provides an update on the outcome of the consultation process and approval in relation to the amended COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to engage with and provide feedback on the proposed amended COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

POLICY

The amended COVID-19 Vaccination Policy operates subject to any government orders and/or directions that are in place from time to time. The amended policy has adopted a 'personal responsibility' approach that strongly encourages vaccination but does not require it to work in our workplace settings. An exception has been applied in 'high-risk' settings where vaccination will be required. High-risk settings are outlined within the policy as CESA Special Schools and all Special Units within mainstream schools.

Furthermore, the policy will not require volunteers and contractors to be vaccinated unless working in a high-risk setting.

PROCESS

The WHS (Work Health and Safety) Consultation on the proposed policy commenced on 26 October 2022 and concluded 4pm on 9 November 2022. A Memorandum was prepared and distributed to all staff, regular volunteers (including board members) and contractors on 26 October 2022.

Correspondence included a public link to the proposed policy, which incorporated the policy, the Risk Assessment, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and a Feedback Form.

The consultation process was transparent:

- All those covered by the proposed policy had access to the necessary documents to ensure full opportunity for engagement in the consultation process.
- The FAQ document provided responses to anticipated questions regarding the proposed policy.
- The IEUSA (Independent Education Union, South Australia) was advised and provided feedback.
- All feedback received as part of the consultation process was collated and considered.
- Ensured a fair and legal consultation process in accordance with the WHS Act and EA (Enterprise Agreement).

CONSULTATION RESULTS

A total of 313 individuals responded to the Feedback Form.

Of the approximately 9,000 CESA (Catholic Education South Australia) staff, two and a half percent (2.5% or 229 of staff) responded, and ninety-seven and a half percent (97.5% or 8,771 of staff) did not respond to the Feedback Form.

Teacher/ESO/CEO staff

Of the 229 respondents:

- 136 (59.4% of staff) supported the proposed policy, 76 (33.2% of staff) did not support the proposed policy and 17 (7.4% of staff) were unsure.
- Across the CESA paid workforce of approximately 9,000 the statistics are as follows:
 - 1.5% supported the proposed policy
 - 0.84% did not support the proposed policy
 - 0.19% were unsure
 - A substantial number of staff (approximately 8,771 / 97.5%) did not respond to the feedback form.

Volunteers

As the process was open and accessible, it is difficult to quantify the number of volunteers eligible to respond; however, of the 82 volunteer responses received:

- 33 (40.2% of respondents) supported the proposed policy and 43 (52.4% of respondents) did not support the proposed policy and 6 (7.3% of respondents) were unsure.

Contractors

Similarly, it is difficult to quantify the number of contractors eligible to respond; however, of the 2 contractor responses received, 100% of respondents supported the proposed policy.

Response spread across CESA (313 responses)

- 207 (66.1%) Adelaide Diocesan Schools
- 23 (7.3%) Port Pirie Diocesan Schools
- 83 (26.5%) Separately Governed Schools

Common themes from those in favour of the policy

- It is a fair and realistic policy in our current climate.
- 'Personal responsibility' is more sustainable and less divisive and 'strongly encouraged' to be vaccinated is appropriate.
- Vaccination should never have been mandated.

Common themes from those not in favour of the policy

- CESA should keep the vaccination mandate.
- In favour of 'personal responsibility' but should remove the vaccination requirement entirely.
- Vaccination is a personal choice and should not be mandated.

LEGALITY OF POLICY

The amended policy is focussed on providing a safe workplace for our workers and others and is a reasonable requirement.

By undertaking genuine consultation with and providing a feedback mechanism to those affected by this decision, and duly considering that feedback, CESA is meeting the requirements of the WHS Act (Sections 47, 48 and 49) and Enterprise Agreement (Clause 11 – Change & Consultation).

POLICY APPROVAL

Following the consultation process, all Employers within CESA endorsed the policy, and final approval was provided by the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) on 22 November 2022.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

The implementation of the new [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) will apply as follows:

- Unvaccinated staff will be able to work in our mainstream school settings effective from the SACCS policy date of approval, 22 November 2022.
- Current staff working in high-risk settings will be required to demonstrate compliance with this Policy and will require up-to-date vaccination (or approved medical exemption) by 23 January 2023.
- New or returning staff working in high-risk settings are required to demonstrate compliance with this policy and will require up-to-date vaccination (or approved medical exemption), by no later than 23 January 2023.

Thank you all for your contribution towards ensuring we have a safe and healthy environment for our people, our students, and our community.

Yours sincerely



Susan Young
Assistant Director - People, Leadership and Culture