

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

1. Overview

COVID-19 has created a public health emergency which has had a significant impact on all our lives and on how we work together and educate our students.

Everyone at International Grammar School (the School) has been impacted. We have all played a vital role, each doing our best and supporting each other, our students and the School community during this difficult time. The COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving and we continue to need to adapt and respond quickly and responsibly.

As part of this response, this policy contains requirements that will apply to all employees, contractors and volunteers (staff) regarding vaccination against COVID-19. It supplements our Worker Health and Safety policies.

The health and safety of our students and staff at the School is at the forefront of our decision making. The School considers vaccination against COVID-19 is a reasonably practicable control measure under work health and safety laws to protect the health and safety of our students and staff and to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 at the School.

This policy is based on a WHS risk assessment that had regard to factors such as:

- (a) the highly transmissible nature of COVID-19 (being an upper respiratory disease) and the level of COVID-19 currently circulating in the community
- (b) the risks arising from COVID-19 to students and staff if exposed to COVID-19 while attending the School which includes serious risk of serious illness or death
- (c) the number of students attending the School and that some of these students are unvaccinated
- (d) the School's physical layout and work spaces
- (e) that vaccination is a higher order control measure
- (f) information from Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and the NSW Department of Health about the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and preventing serious illness or death
- (g) that while other measures, such as mask wearing, and social distancing, are demonstrated to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, the effectiveness of these measures depends on people applying them consistently or correctly. They do not provide a substitute for the protection offered by vaccines, nor do they reduce the risk of developing serious illness once somebody acquires an infection
- (h) that rapid antigen testing, used on a repeated basis as screening tool, may assist with reducing (but not eliminating) the risk of an unvaccinated staff member attending the workplace with COVID-19, but does not reduce the risk of an unvaccinated staff member being exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace.

- (i) vaccination is the most effective and efficient control available to combat the risks posed by COVID-19; and
- (j) even with high vaccine rates in the community, COVID-19 will remain a significant hazard in any workplace in which there is a possibility that people will interact or use the same common spaces (even at separate times).

The School considers that requiring staff to be vaccinated to undertake work at the School, in these circumstances, is a reasonable and lawful direction and that being vaccinated is necessary to meet the requirements of all roles at the School.

To reflect the evolving nature of COVID-19, the School will continue to review our approach and make updates to this policy as circumstances change. These include changes to public health orders, rates of community transmission and relevant medical evidence.

2. Requirements for staff members

All staff must have received at least two doses of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine to undertake work at the School which includes any site (outside of home) where work is performed on behalf of the School (eg sports, co-curricular activities, camps, training and conferences and social functions).

Any staff who do not provide appropriate evidence of their vaccination status to the School will not be allowed to work at the School.

Applications for exemptions from this requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with paragraph 3.

The requirement to be vaccinated to undertake work at the School is ongoing. This

policy may subsequently be amended to include booster vaccinations and the School would consult with you about that as required. The School strongly encourages all staff to have booster vaccinations within the time period recommended by ATAGI.

3. Exemption from requirement to be vaccinated

There may be medical reasons for a staff member not being able to be vaccinated. The School may in its discretion grant an exemption from the vaccination requirement in this policy if a staff member has a medical contraindication for all TGA approved COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with ATAGI guidelines.

If a staff member wishes to apply for a medical exemption, they should apply in writing to the Deputy Principal Wellbeing, Mary Duma, at maryd@igssyd.nsw.edu and provide appropriate medical information which meets the relevant ATAGI guidelines, including a medical contraindication certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner certifying:

- (a) that the staff member is unable to receive any available COVID-19 vaccine because of a recognised medical contraindication
- (b) whether the medical contraindication will permanently or temporarily prevent the vaccination; and
- (c) where the medical contraindication only temporarily prevents the vaccination, the earliest time that the staff member may be able to receive the vaccination.

The School will consider medical exemption applications on a case by case basis. The School may request additional information from a staff member to support their request for an exemption.

It is likely that there will be circumstances where a staff member has a valid medical contraindication but an exemption is not granted because the School has undertaken a risk assessment regarding the School's ability to accommodate the staff member working at the School while unvaccinated, and the School has formed the view that those risks are not able to be adequately managed with other risk mitigation strategies at that time.

4. Evidence of vaccination status

The School will collect evidence of vaccination status.

The purpose of collecting evidence of vaccination status is to manage work health and safety risks relating to COVID-19. Vaccination information will be handled in accordance with our Privacy Policy, including by being held securely in the School's Google Drive.

If a staff member does not provide proof of their vaccination status or does not wish to disclose their vaccination status, the School will assume the staff member is not vaccinated.

5. Support to get vaccinated

- (a) ATAGI recommends that all adults (and children over 5 years of age) be vaccinated against COVID-19. According to the Australian Government's Department of Health, being vaccinated against COVID-19 has many benefits including:
 - (i) protecting against severe illness and death from COVID-19
 - (ii) preventing complications such as 'long COVID'
 - (iii) protecting people who can't be vaccinated due to medical conditions
 - (iv) slowing the spread of COVID-19
 - (v) keeping hospitalisation rates at a level our health system can cope with
 - (vi) minimising the need for lockdowns and school closures; and
 - (vii) being able to attend events and travel
- (b) The School strongly encourages all staff who can receive a COVID-19 vaccination to maintain up-to-date vaccination status
- (c) If a staff member has concerns or questions about vaccine safety, we encourage staff to speak to their medical practitioner or seek more information from official government sources, such as the Australian Department of Health.

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