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COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

Approval Level:	EMT
Policy Type:	Organisation
Approval Date:	25/01/2022
Review cycle:	Every 2 months for first 6 months of operation <i>(Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving regulatory guidance this policy may need to be reviewed earlier than required by the review cycle)</i>
Review Date:	25/04/2022 or earlier where Pandemic Orders change
Responsible Officer:	Manager People and Culture
Owner:	People and Culture
Responsible Director:	Corporate Performance
Relevant Legislation/Authority:	<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Fair Work Act 2009 Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Pandemic Orders</i>
DOCSETID:	4643913

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy includes to:

- 1.1. Facilitate compliance with Pandemic Orders related to COVID-19 vaccination;
- 1.2. Provide a safe and healthy workplace; and
- 1.3. Encourage and promote COVID-19 vaccination in order to limit the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) within employees and other individuals working at or providing services to the City of Greater Bendigo (the City).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The policy supports the City's implementation of Pandemic Orders which apply to the Victorian community including the local government sector related to COVID-19 vaccination and has been



implemented following consultation with our employees including the Health and Safety Committee and Staff Consultative Committee.

- 2.2. The policy should be read in conjunction with relevant Pandemic Orders that are in place from time to time including but not limited to orders related to working from home, wearing of masks, density limits and keeping records of all people that enter the workplace such as with the Victorian Government QR Code Service.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all City employees, volunteers, students, trainees, apprentices and contractors (where contractually obliged to comply with City policies) who perform work at the City.

4. DEFINITIONS

ATAGI means the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.

Booster means a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Contractor means an individual or body corporate (including employees of the body corporate), which is not an Employee, engaged by the City under contract to provide goods, services or works.

COVID-19 vaccine means a vaccine to protect a person against SARSCoV-2 that has been registered or provisionally registered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

EAP means Employee Assistance Program, a free counselling service offered to all employees and their immediate families at the city.

Employee means a person who receives a salary or wages from the City (employed on either a full-time, part-time or casual basis where the nature of the work is permanent/ongoing or temporary for a specified period).

Evidence of vaccination is information about a person's COVID-19 vaccination status and includes:

- (a) the name or type of any COVID-19 vaccine(s) received;
- (b) the date(s) of any COVID-19 vaccine(s) received; and
- (c) information that is derived from a record of information that was made under, or in accordance with, the *Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015* of the Commonwealth. COVID-19 vaccination information may be recorded in a variety of documents, such as a letter from a medical practitioner, a certificate of immunisation, an immunisation history statement obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register or via the myGov or Medicare website or app; or
- (d) in the situation where a person is recently vaccinated this may include on a case by case basis a booking card or other information obtained by the clinic at time of receiving dose of COVID-19 vaccine as a temporary measure while waiting for confirmation of an approved vaccine document.



Evidence of vaccination booking is information that demonstrates a person has a booking to receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine that will cause the person to become fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or fully vaccinated (boosted). Booking information includes a PDF or screen shot of a booking confirmation email or text message.

Individual means a person employed, on student placement, volunteering or a Contractor (where contractually obliged to comply with City policies) to perform work for the City.

Medical practitioner for the purposes of providing a medical exemption is defined as

- (a) a general practice registrar on an approved 3GA training placement; or
- (b) a public health physician; or
- (c) a general physician; or
- (d) an infectious disease physician; or
- (e) a clinical immunologist; or
- (f) a gynaecologist; or
- (g) an obstetrician; or
- (h) a general practitioner who is vocationally registered; or
- (i) a general practitioner who is a fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP); or
- (j) a general practitioner who is a fellow of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)

Pandemic Order includes any government direction, order or legislation related to COVID-19 vaccination such as orders issued under the Victoria's pandemic management framework in Part 8A of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

Vaccination status is to be determined based on the recommendation of ATAGI and means the vaccination status of a person being one of the following:

- (a) **fully vaccinated (boosted)**: a person is fully vaccinated (boosted) if the person has received a booster dose; or
- (b) **fully vaccinated**: the person has received one dose of a one dose COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of a two dose COVID-19 vaccine as recommended by ATAGI; or
- (c) **partially vaccinated**: the person has received at least one dose of a two dose COVID-19 vaccine but has not received all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine; or
- (d) **unvaccinated**: the person has not received any doses of a COVID-19 vaccine; or
- (d) **exempted person**: the person has been granted a medical exemption under clause 12.

5. PRINCIPLES

The following principles apply to this policy:



- 5.1. We care about our community and recognise that a high rate of vaccination is essential for our community, to protect our most vulnerable people, end restrictions and lockdowns and get our community together again
- 5.2. We take responsibility for our actions and comply with legislation and Pandemic Orders related to COVID-19 vaccination requirements.
- 5.3. We work together to create a safe and healthy workplace where the City has a duty to eliminate (and if that's not possible, minimise) risks to health and safety of employees and the public who come into contact with our employees, so far as is reasonably practicable in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.
- 5.4. We lead and support each other and recognize that the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees and community is of the utmost importance and the City has an important role to play in order to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in our community.
- 5.5. We contribute to our community and provide essential services for the benefit and wellbeing of the community and must ensure the effective and efficient delivery of such services to the community with minimal disruption.
- 5.6. We respect each other and work together to maintain a positive culture and gain the trust of others by acting fairly and with integrity.

6. **POLICY**

- 6.1. The City is committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace for all employees, community members and visitors. The City will comply with all Pandemic Orders or other government or legislative directions in relation to collecting, recording and holding vaccination information of individuals.
- 6.2. Individuals must provide evidence of vaccination against COVID-19 to their Manager or as otherwise directed:
 - 6.2.1. in accordance with Pandemic Orders or other government or legislative direction; or
 - 6.2.2. in accordance with a lawful direction, following a risk assessment.

7. **Risk Assessments**

- 7.1. If a Pandemic Order requires individuals to be vaccinated against COVID-19, a risk assessment (if not already completed) is not necessary in order for the City to require individuals covered by the Pandemic Order to be vaccinated.
- 7.2. Where required the CEO or relevant Director in consultation with the Work Health and Safety Coordinator may direct Managers to complete a risk assessment.
- 7.3. Managers should have regard to the following, in completing a risk assessment:



- 7.3.1. the nature of the workplace;
- 7.3.2. the nature of the duties required of the role;
- 7.3.3. the extent of community transmission of COVID-19 (including variants of concern) in the location where work is performed;
- 7.3.4. other control measures in place or available; and
- 7.3.5. any other relevant considerations.

7.4. Consideration of the above matters and any other relevant considerations must be documented in writing after consultation with the relevant Health and Safety Representative and the Work Health and Safety Coordinator.

7.5. On completion a copy of the documented risk assessment should be provided to the CEO or relevant Director, Work Health and Safety Coordinator and relevant Work Health and Safety Representative and may be available on request to the relevant union representative.

8. Notifying Individuals of vaccination requirements

8.1. Where a Pandemic Order has been announced that mandates vaccination, the CEO or relevant Director will notify affected individuals of the requirement to be vaccinated, the timeframe for compliance and the process to be undertaken by individuals to confirm their vaccination status.

8.2. Where a risk assessment indicates that vaccination against COVID-19 is required, all individuals who are required to be vaccinated must be notified in writing by the CEO or relevant Director and provided with a copy of the risk assessment. A copy of the notification may also be provided to the relevant union representative on request.

8.3. After receiving a notification under either clause 8.1 or 8.2, within 7 days or other timeframe prescribed by the Pandemic Order, individuals must provide the required evidence to their Manager and advise whether:

- 8.3.1. they have already received dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in Australia – and if so, provide evidence of vaccination;
- 8.3.2. they have an upcoming appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine – and if so, provide evidence of that appointment(s);
- 8.3.3. they otherwise consent to being vaccinated and will make the necessary appointments to do so as soon as possible and will provide evidence of that appointment(s); or
- 8.3.4. they are not vaccinated and for medical reasons cannot be vaccinated and wish to apply for an exemption (Medical Exemption);



8.3.5. they are not vaccinated and do not consent to being vaccinated for reasons other than those related to the ATAGI approved medical exemptions (Refusal).

8.4. If a risk assessment or Pandemic Order requires individuals to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or a booster, Managers must follow up with any individuals who have not provided a response under clause 8.3 and issue a written direction to respond to the notification within a further 7 days. If an individual fails to respond within the further time period requested, they will be taken to have given a Refusal.

9. Vaccination and Evidence of Vaccination

9.1. Individuals are encouraged to proactively provide People and Culture evidence of their vaccination status including the type of COVID-19 vaccine(s) and date(s) received and including evidence of vaccination with a booster at any time to Recruitment@Bendigo.vic.gov.au.

9.2. If a Pandemic Order requires employees to be vaccinated, or to have made a booking to be vaccinated, by a particular date, the evidence requirements of the Pandemic Order will apply.

9.3. Individuals who, require vaccination including with a booster must provide evidence of a vaccination booking to their Manager, within 7 days of being notified of the requirement under clause 8.3 or where a Pandemic Order exists in line with the prescribed timeframe. If this cannot reasonably be achieved, individuals should discuss with their Manager the steps taken to be vaccinated and the likely time required to obtain an appointment including to provide evidence of vaccination booking.

9.4. The time by which individuals are required to be fully vaccinated or fully vaccinated (boosted) will be determined based on the Pandemic Order or in the case of a risk assessment the recommendation of ATAGI as to the time between doses of vaccines approved for use in Australia. Individuals should keep their Manager regularly updated as to their progress in this regard.

9.5. All individuals who are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 may also be required to provide evidence of vaccination with a booster, as advised by the City at a relevant time. A requirement to obtain a booster will be based on the recommendations of ATAGI.

9.6. Evidence of vaccination must be provided by employees to: Recruitment@Bendigo.vic.gov.au. People and Culture will maintain a register of an individual's vaccination status and vaccination information in accordance with the information privacy requirements at clause 13. People and Culture will provide a regular report to Managers of information in the register related to employees within their work unit.

9.7. Employees may be granted leave by their People Manager for the purpose of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Where possible, employees are encouraged to attend appointments outside of work hours, but where this is not possible an alternative time during business hours can be arranged in consultation with the employees People Manager.



10. **Redeployment and Alternative Duties**

10.1. Redeployment will only be offered to those employees with a medical exemption consistent with the ATAGI advice and provided by an approved medical practitioner. Employees who cannot be redeployed will be managed on a case by case basis by the Manager in consultation with the HR Coordinator.

10.2. Individuals who have not refused a vaccination and are awaiting COVID-19 vaccination or have applied for a medical exemption will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant Manager and HR Coordinator and may be:

10.2.1. required to perform safe or alternative duties for periods of time, depending on the degree of risk of exposure to COVID-19; and

10.2.2. follow additional directions including working from a different location, working from home where practicable, testing and/or eating and drinking only in specified locations;

until such time as they have provided evidence of a COVID-19 vaccination booking and/or evidence of COVID-19 vaccination to their Manager or are granted a medical exemption or are taken to have refused vaccination.

11. **Refusals**

11.1. Individuals who are required to be vaccinated under this policy and who do not comply with the requirement to be vaccinated will be directed by the relevant Manager, Director or CEO that they are unable to attend City sites, property and workplaces. If the individual is also an employee further action will be taken in accordance with clause 11.2..

11.2. Employees who are required to be vaccinated under this policy and refuse the lawful and reasonable direction to provide evidence of vaccination will be removed from duty (stand down) and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, managed in accordance with the Managing Misconduct Procedure.

11.3. This clause does not apply to any employee granted a medical exemption under clause 12.

12. **Medical Exemptions**

12.1. Employees who wish to apply for an exemption to the requirement to be vaccinated must provide sufficient information and supporting evidence from a medical practitioner that they are medically exempt and unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccine based on current ATAGI approved medical exemptions or the Pandemic Order, to their Manager and the HR Coordinator as soon as possible after receiving a notification under clause 8. The City may request additional medical information from a relevant specialist to confirm the rationale for granting an exemption.

12.2. Exemptions will be considered on a case by case basis by the Manager and HR Coordinator with approval from the CEO or relevant Director.



12.3. Employees who are granted an exemption may be required to perform safe or alternative duties for periods of time, depending on the degree of risk of exposure to COVID-19. Additional control measures may be required including working from a different location such as working from home where practicable and/or eating and drinking only in specified locations.

13. Information collected under this policy

13.1. All information, including health information, collected under this policy will be treated confidentially, so far as is possible.

13.2. Information will also be handled in accordance with applicable privacy and/or health information legislation. For more information as to how your personal or health information is handled, please refer to the [Privacy Policy](#).

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals and Employees

All individuals and employees are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this policy;
- Ensuring they comply with all control measures put in place by the City from time to time, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Such measures may include wearing face masks, testing, social distancing, isolation and quarantine and may be required regardless of whether an individual is required to be vaccinated under this policy;
- If required, comply with any direction to perform alternative duties whilst their COVID-19 vaccination is being arranged or confirmed or where a medical exemption is granted;
- Alerting their Manager and the Work Health and Safety Coordinator as soon as possible in the event of another employee or person at the work premises failing to comply with measures in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19; and
- In the event vaccination against COVID-19 is required for the individual's role, being vaccinated and providing satisfactory evidence of vaccination.

Managers

In addition to their responsibilities as employees, those with management responsibilities are also responsible in consultation with People Managers for:

- Ensuring that all individuals who are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 under this policy have provided satisfactory evidence of vaccination and where an individual has not provided evidence or is partially vaccinated, unvaccinated or an exempted person the situation is managed, in accordance with this policy;



- Ensuring that any unvaccinated individuals who are covered by a medical exemption are provided with safe alternative duties, in accordance with this policy;
- In consultation with the HR team initiating and managing disciplinary action in accordance with the Managing Misconduct Procedure.
- Having completed a risk assessment under clause 7 of this policy for their work area and all employees under their supervision as directed;
- Determining whether, in consultation with the Work Health and Safety Coordinator vaccination against COVID-19 is required for some of, or all of, the individuals in their work area on the basis of the risk assessment;
- In the event a risk assessment dictates that vaccination against COVID-19 is required, ensuring that arrangements are made for the vaccination of relevant individuals in accordance with this policy;
- Sighting and recording evidence of vaccination of the individuals in their work area;
- Ongoing review of control measures in place to minimise the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace or in connection with work duties;
- Ensuring that any new positions which require COVID-19 vaccination are clearly advertised on that basis;
- Encouraging access to counselling through EAP offering support and information in relation to vaccination against COVID-19 to support the employee in their decision making;
- Directing an employee in relation to appropriate duties and workplace while awaiting vaccination against COVID-19; and
- Approving COVID-19 vaccination leave.

CEO and Directors

In addition to their management responsibilities the CEO and Directors are also responsible for

- Notifying employees within the organisation or their directorate, following a Pandemic Order or risk assessment, of COVID-19 vaccination requirements;
- In consultation with the Work Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health and Safety representative approving the risk assessment recommendations;
- Directing individuals who have not provided evidence of COVID-19 vaccination to undertake alternate duties or be redeployed or other directions as required;
- In consultation with the HR Coordinator approve medical exemptions and where necessary request from individuals additional medical evidence to support the exemption; and

- Approving disciplinary action in accordance with the Managing Misconduct Procedure.

HR Coordinator

In the context of this policy, the Human Resources team led by the HR Coordinator within the People and Culture Unit is responsible for:

- Providing support to Managers in dealing with queries or concerns raised by individuals, including in relation to an unwillingness to be vaccinated;
- Providing support and guidance to individuals in relation to their rights and obligations under this policy;
- Ensuring that all employees who are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 under this policy have provided satisfactory evidence of vaccination;
- Keeping an updated register of vaccination status of employees including:
 - evidence of vaccination;
 - the name or type of any dose of COVID-19 vaccine received by the employee; and
 - the date on which the employee received any dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Reporting to Managers on the vaccination status of employees;
- Collection of Medical Exemption Applications; and
- In consultation with the relevant Manager initiating disciplinary action including removal of duty (stand down) where an employee refuses vaccination.

Work Health and Safety Coordinator

- Ensuring that appropriate control measures are implemented and regularly reviewed, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Such measures may include wearing face masks, testing, social distancing, isolation and quarantine and may be required regardless of whether an employee is required to be vaccinated under this policy;
- Keeping an updated register of all risk assessments and roles and/or work areas in relation to which COVID-19 vaccination is required; and
- Providing support to Managers in relation to the conduct of risk assessments and ensuring all Managers conduct a risk assessment within the agreed timeframe of being directed by the CEO or relevant Director.

15. RELATED DOCUMENTS



Employees are encouraged to access the related internal documents which are available on the intranet and/or external resources which are available as per the below.

These include:

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Managing Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [Flexibility at Work Policy](#)
- Pandemic Order Register:
<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register>
- Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 information:
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/latest-news-and-data-covid-19>
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Living with COVID SharePoint resources](#) includes link to any directions issued under this policy
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
[Explainer: Mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations and your rights](#)
- [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation](#)

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to People and Culture

16. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

17. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Business Unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with the staff Consultative Committee and with the approval of EMT or where required, resolution of Council.

18. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date Approved	Responsible Officer	Unit	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
October, 2021	VOT	People & Culture	Develop	1	29/11/2021
October 2021	RM	Legal	Administrative – DOCSETID updated	2	29/11/2021
January 2022	VOT	People & Culture	Review	3	25/04/2022