

CHL Employee COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines CHL expectations and requirements in relation to COVID-19 vaccination.

Scope & Applicability

This policy applies to all CHL employees.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 virus is a highly infectious disease. Sick, frail, elderly and vulnerable persons can suffer severe health consequences as a result of this disease, including death.

Catholic Healthcare (CHL) is a values-based, for purpose provider of quality aged and health care services. Our mission, to promote life in all its fullness, informs all that we do.

Consistent with our mission, Catholic Healthcare is enacting this Policy with the sole aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of our employees, residents, clients, patients and families.

As a Catholic organisation, we stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable. Consistent with Government advice, we consider that COVID-19 vaccination is the best protection available to us at this time, against the serious and potentially deadly effects of Corona Virus.

CHL has work health and safety duties and responsibilities to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of our employees and other persons entering CHL premises.

Additionally, our residents, clients, patients and their authorised representatives and family members are sharing with us their expectation that CHL employees providing care and support are vaccinated.

For each of these reasons, CHL considers that requiring all employees (including residential aged care, home and community, retirement living, health and corporate staff) to receive the COVID-19 vaccination is a reasonable and practicable means for managing the risks of COVID-19 for our sick, frail, elderly and vulnerable residents, clients and patients and our employees in conjunction with our infection control procedures and other resident safety protocols.

2. COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement

It is a requirement that all CHL employees be vaccinated for COVID-19.

All employees are expected to have received:

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- at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine (approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in Australia) by 16 September 2021; and
- a second dose of the COVID-19 vaccination by 31 October 2021; and
- have received a booster dose of COVID-19 as required by Government.

3. Reporting and Evidence Requirements

3.1 Reporting to My Aged Care

Commencing from 27 July 2021, all residential aged care providers and approved providers of home care package services to clients are required to provide weekly reports on the vaccination status of the provider's workforce on the My Aged Care Portal.

The vaccination status reports include the following information:

- The total number of workers at each aged care service;
- The number of workers at each aged care service who have received a single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine; and
- The number of workers at each aged care service who have received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Reports submitted on the My Aged Care Portal are de-identified so that personal information relating to the vaccination status of individual employees is not submitted.

3.2 Reporting by QR Codes

In addition to the mandatory reporting on the My Aged Care Portal outlined above, a number of State public health orders and directions require residential aged care employees to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status.

Furthermore, Catholic Healthcare requires information about the vaccination status of staff to effectively plan its rosters and enable CHL to fulfill its work, health and safety duties.

To assist CHL in meeting its all requirements of this clause, we have introduced QR codes on posters in each of our homes and workplaces. All CHL employees are required to scan the QR code on the posters in their home or workplace (or advise their manager) to indicate that they have received a COVID-19 vaccination.

When scanning the QR code or advising their manager, employees are asked to indicate:

- Employee number
- Date of first COVID-19 vaccination dose; and then again
- Date of second COVID-19 vaccination dose.

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This process needs to be completed after the first dose and again after the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is received.

For employees who are mobile, visiting clients homes, or who are otherwise unable to enter data into a QR Code, employees may provide vaccination data as required in this clause in the following by sending an email to their manager.

3.3 Evidence of COVID-19 Vaccinations

To enable CHL to meet all the requirements of this clause, all CHL employees are also required to provide evidence of their COVID-19 Vaccination.

Subject to different requirements being introduced by State or Federal Governments, the evidence required can be from **one** of three sources:

1. Medical Vaccination Statement from your GP/ Hospital, or,
2. Australian Government COVID-19 digital Certificate located on myGov; or
3. Medicare Immunization History Statement which can be shared via email from the Medicare app.

Please forward the above evidence to your manager or send to covid19evidence@chcs.com.au.

Evidence of COVID-19 vaccination will be stored securely within Human Resources COVID records in line with all applicable privacy laws and the Catholic Healthcare privacy policy which is available at [CHL Privacy Policy](#). The dates of vaccination will be recorded in the payroll system.

4. Exemptions

Given the importance of the COVID-19 vaccination for the protection of our residents, clients, patients and our employees, CHL anticipates there will only be a very limited number of circumstances in which an exemption will be granted.

4.1 Access Exemptions

Employees who work in aged care and healthcare have been given priority access to the COVID-19 vaccines. In the rare situation that an employee has not been able to access a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, request(s) for temporary exemption will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Consideration will be given to whether the employee:

- is needed to respond to a critical workforce shortage, and/or
- performs duties which are necessary to provide specialist clinical care of a resident, and/or

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- performs duties which are necessary to ensure non-specialist maintenance of quality care to residents.

Access exemptions will only apply until employees can access a COVID-19 vaccine or alternative staffing arrangements can be reasonably and practicably accommodated.

4.2 Medical Exemption

CHL recognises that in exceptional circumstances a very small number of employees may not be able to have the COVID-19 vaccination for medical reasons.

To apply for a medical exemption an employee must provide a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner.

In NSW, the medical exemption certificate should be in the form approved by NSW Health which at the time of writing is available at: is available [at the NSW Health](#) or [COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Contraindication](#).

In Qld, the medical exemption certificate should certify that:

- The employee is unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccination because the person has a recognised medical contraindication, and
- Whether the medical contraindication will permanently or temporarily prevent COVID-19 vaccination, and
- If temporarily prevented from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, when the person may be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

If the exemption is temporary, at the end of the temporary exemption period, the staff member must obtain a COVID-19 vaccination unless another exemption applies. Proof of exemption as outlined in this Policy is required.

Evidence of medical exemption will be stored securely in the staff member's file in line with all applicable privacy laws and the Catholic Healthcare privacy policy which is available at [CHL Privacy Policy](#). It will also be recorded in the payroll system.

5. Access to COVID-19 Vaccination

CHL has implemented a number of measures to assist employees receive the COVID-19 Vaccination. These include:

- Education and information about COVID-19 vaccination.
- Onsite vaccination clinics.

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- Concierge service provided to all residential aged care and home and community services employees to assist them to book appointments for their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination.
- The concierge service will also assist with booking a second dose if requested.
- Paid leave to attend a vaccination appointment should the appointment be during the employee's normal working hours.
- Providing information and links to COVID-19 vaccination websites to enable employees who want to book appointments themselves.
- Providing general information about COVID vaccination from a number of Government and medical sources in a range of formats including email, video, group discussions, one-on one conversations.

Any employee requiring assistance to access a COVID-19 vaccination is requested to speak to their manager immediately to ensure compliance with this Policy.

6. Record Keeping

Data and other employee information collected via the QR code and or sent to the Covid19evidence@chcs.com.au will be collected, stored, used and disclosed in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (including applicable public health orders and directions) and CHL's Privacy Policy, [CHL Privacy Policy](#).

7. Refusal of COVID-19 Vaccination

Employees refusing to receive a COVID-19 vaccination for any reason other than those outlined in section 4 of this Policy, are requested to notify their manager in writing by 16 September 2021.

8. Further Information

Further information relating to your rights and obligations under this Policy can be found at CHL dedicated COVID-19 Information hub on Connect. [COVID-19 - Employee Information Hub](#) .

If you have specific questions relating to your individual circumstances, please speak to your manager in the first instance. You can also contact the HR Team on P 8876 2177 or email HR@chcs.com.au.

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9. Breach of this Policy

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Consideration will be given to the employee's role and the risk(s) refusal to vaccinate presents for our residents, clients, patients and to other employees and any other factors CHL considers relevant in the circumstances.

Table Review History

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|---------------------|----------------|
| 23 August 2021 | New Policy |
| 8 September 2021 | Updated Policy |
| | |

Related Policies & Documents

Public Health Direction (Residential Aged Care) No 5 Qld

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) Clinical guidance on use of COVID-19 vaccine in Australia in 2021 (v6.0)

Department of Health Mandatory Vaccination of Aged Care Workers 03/08/21

Key words for search

COVID-19, Vaccination, Pandemic

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