



Rationale

Dignity, safety, health, and wellbeing are central to the Church's teaching, and DOBCEL is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. All school Principals and Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) Managers have a Duty of Care to provide and maintain a work environment that is free of risk to the health and safety of all.

The health and safety of all members of our community are at the forefront of everything we do. The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure a safe environment for DOBCEL employees, contractors, volunteers, students and their families, and others attending DOBCEL education facilities by permitting them to attend only in accordance with this policy
- assist in the prevention of the unnecessary acquisition and spread of COVID-19 at DOBCEL education facilities and events by complying with any legal requirements with respect to COVID-19.

This policy commences with immediate effect and operates subject to any applicable Chief Health Officer (CHO) Directions, which may be issued from time to time after its commencement.

Definitions

In this policy, the following terms have the meaning set out below:

CHO Directions means the directions issued by Victoria's Chief Health Officer or authorised delegate under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic.) in relation to mandatory vaccination requirements, including the *COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Directions*, as in force at the relevant time.

Critical unforeseen circumstance means a circumstance that DOBCEL could not reasonably have foreseen nor planned for, which results in a critical need for staff.

Education worker means:

- any person employed by DOBCEL (whether on an ongoing, fixed-term or casual basis)
- any person contracted to work at a DOBCEL education facility and who will, or may, be in close proximity to children, students, or staff (whether or not they are engaged by DOBCEL), including casual relief teachers, IT personnel and National Disability Insurance Scheme providers and auditors, but does not include delivery personnel
- students on placement
- staff of any other entity who attend a DOBCEL education facility
- volunteers who attend a DOBCEL education facility and who work in close proximity to children, students, or staff (including parent helpers).

Emergency situation means a situation where it is reasonably apparent to DOBCEL that medical treatment is necessary, as a matter of urgency, to:

- save a person's life;
- prevent serious damage to a person's health
- prevent a person from suffering or continuing to suffer significant pain or distress.

Excepted person means an education worker who holds an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) medical exemption for COVID-19 vaccination, which states that they are unable to receive a dose, or a further dose, of a COVID-19 vaccine due to either:

- a medical contraindication
- an acute medical illness (including where the person has been diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2), and the certification provided is within the effective date specified by the medical practitioner or six months from the date of certification, whichever is earlier.

Fully vaccinated means, in respect to an education worker, that the education worker has received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

DOBCEL, for the purpose of administering this policy, means authorised DOBCEL employees and principals of DOBCEL schools.

DOBCEL education facility means a DOBCEL school, a DOBCEL office, or a facility providing outside school hours care for students.

Medical contraindication means one of the following contraindications to the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine:

- anaphylaxis after a previous dose
- anaphylaxis to any component of the vaccine, including polysorbate or polyethylene glycol
- in relation to AstraZeneca: a history of capillary leak syndrome or thrombosis with thrombocytopenia occurring after a previous dose
- in relation to Comirnaty or Spikevax: myocarditis or pericarditis attributed to a previous dose of either Comirnaty or Spikevax
- the occurrence of any other serious adverse event that has been attributed to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by an experienced immunisation provider or medical specialist (and not attributed to any other identifiable cause); and has been reported to state adverse event programs and/or the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Partially vaccinated means, with respect to an education worker, that the education worker has received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and is not an excepted person.

Premises has the same meaning as in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic.) but does not include an education worker's ordinary place of residence.

Unvaccinated means, with respect to an education worker, that the education worker has not received a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and is not an excepted person.

Vaccination status means whether an education worker is fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, unvaccinated or an excepted person.

Policy Statement

Education workers are covered by this policy

This policy applies to education workers. The obligations imposed on Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Ltd (DOBCEL) by the Chief Health Officer (CHO) or authorised delegate Directions in relation to the vaccination of education workers are explained in this policy.

As a condition of attendance at the premises of a DOBCEL education facility, education workers are required to read and accept the terms of this policy.

Vaccination status

In accordance with DOBCEL obligations under the CHO Directions, DOBCEL is obliged to, and will, collect, record, and hold information about the vaccination status of any education worker who is, or may be, scheduled to work at a DOBCEL education facility on or after 18 October 2021.

If an education worker is partially vaccinated on or after 18 October 2021, DOBCEL is obliged to, and will, in addition to information about their vaccination status, collect, record and hold information about whether that education worker has a booking to receive a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 29 November 2021, which will result in the education worker becoming fully vaccinated.

Any information provided to DOBCEL by an education worker in accordance with this policy will be treated confidentially for the purpose of determining compliance with this policy and to enable DOBCEL to comply with its obligations under the CHO Directions.

Evidence of vaccination status

DOBCEL will accept either of the following as evidence of vaccination status:

- a certificate of immunisation (including a COVID-19 digital certificate)
- an immunisation history statement obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register.

Evidence of a booking to receive a first or second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

DOBCEL will accept as evidence of a booking to receive a first or second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine an email or letter or other form of notice from a medical clinic or the state government COVID-19 vaccination booking system confirming that the education worker has a booking to become fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021.

Privacy

Subject to the CHO Directions, the information provided about an education worker's vaccination status in accordance with this policy will be handled by DOBCEL in accordance with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) [Data Collection Statement](#).

Attendance on the premises of a DOBCEL education facility

The CHO Directions oblige DOBCEL to take all reasonable steps to ensure that, on or after 18 October 2021, an education worker who is unvaccinated does not enter or remain on the premises of a DOBCEL education facility for the purposes of working on those premises unless an exception under the CHO Directions applies.

If an education worker does not provide information about their vaccination status, DOBCEL will, in accordance with the CHO Directions, treat that education worker as unvaccinated when considering whether they may enter or remain on the premises of any DOBCEL education facility for the purposes of working at the DOBCEL education facility.

Commencing on 18 October 2021, unless permitted by the terms of this policy, unvaccinated education workers and any education worker in respect of whom DOBCEL does not have information about their vaccination status must not enter or remain on the premises of any DOBCEL education facility for the purposes of working at the DOBCEL education facility.

Excepted persons may enter or remain on the premises of a DOBCEL education facility for the purpose of working on those premises.

Exceptional circumstances exception

At any time, an education worker, regardless of their vaccination status, is permitted to attend the premises of any DOBCEL education facility even if DOBCEL has not collected information about their vaccination status if one or more of the following exceptional circumstances set out in the CHO Directions applies:

1. an education worker is required to attend a DOBCEL education facility to perform work or duties at that facility that is or are necessary to provide for an urgent specialist clinical or medical care due to an emergency situation or critical unforeseen circumstance
2. an education worker is required to fill a vacancy to provide urgent care, to maintain quality of care and/or continue essential operations at a DOBCEL education facility due to an emergency situation or a critical unforeseen circumstance
3. an education worker is required to attend a DOBCEL education facility to respond to an emergency at the facility
4. an education worker is required to perform urgent and essential work at a DOBCEL education facility to protect the health and safety of education workers or members of the public, or to protect assets or infrastructure.

In the event of exceptional circumstances (2) to (4), DOBCEL must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the education worker remains on the premises of the DOBCEL education facility only for the period necessary to respond to the exceptional circumstance.

Principles

Common good

People are fundamentally social beings. Social, political and economic organisation has, therefore, implications for the entire community. Each social group, therefore, must take account of the rights and aspirations of other groups, and of the wellbeing of the whole human family. The common good is reached when all work together to improve the wellbeing of society and the wider world. The rights of the individual to personal possessions and community resources must be balanced with the needs of the disadvantaged and dispossessed.

Human dignity

Our common humanity requires respect for and support of the sanctity and worth of every human life. All other rights and responsibilities flow from the concept of human dignity. This principle is deemed as the central aspect of the Church's social teaching. The belief that each life has value is shared with International Human Rights which are universal, inviolable and inalienable.

References

The following Victorian Government Directions per [health.vic.gov](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-directions):

- COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Directions
- COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Workers) Directions
- COVID-19 Open Premises Directions