



Evergreen School Division

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Dear Staff:

We are still receiving information and guidance pertinent to public health orders announced on August 24th regarding masks, vaccinations and COVID-19 testing for unvaccinated staff.

The following will not answer all of your questions; it is, however, what we have received so far from Manitoba Education. We will continue to communicate with you as additional details become available.

Q: Why is the province making it mandatory for designated public sector employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19?

A: *Public health must ensure that as many people as possible, particularly those under 12 who may not yet be able to get vaccinated, are protected from the virus. The policy also protects other vulnerable groups including seniors, patients, and non-immunized people.*

Q: Who will be subject to the public health order?

A: *The order specifies public sector employees who deal directly with the public, especially those who serve vulnerable people and children.*

The order includes the education sector. This will apply to all Evergreen employees.

Q. What is required for vaccination/proof of vaccination?

A. *Everyone subject to the order must become fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and provide their employer with proof they are fully vaccinated, in order to continue working. Fully immunized individuals are those who have received both doses (any combination) of an approved two dose COVID-19 vaccine (AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna), or a single dose of an approved single dose COVID-19 vaccine (Janssen/Johnson & Johnson) with more than 14 days having passed since the final vaccination was received.*

Q. What will happen if I am not fully immunized, or if we do not provide proper proof of vaccination?

A. *If proper proof of vaccination is not provided, employees will only be permitted to continue working in their designated position if they get tested for COVID-19 at intervals specified in the order, which could be up to three times a week for full time employees.
Further details on testing intervals provided.*

Q. Is my employment conditional on being fully vaccinated?

A. *The policy does not require vaccination as a condition of employment. Rather, employees will have a choice between being fully vaccinated and showing proof of vaccination, or undergoing frequent COVID-19 testing, in order to work.*

Q. How will the testing process work?

A. *More detailed work is underway on the public health order and on the guidance to support it.
The Division has been informed this testing will occur on an employee's own time.*

Q. What are the acceptable forms of proof of vaccination?

A. *Acceptable forms of proof will include the Manitoba Immunization Card (digital or physical), or a secure printed provincial immunization record from either public health or the Shared Health online portal that shows immunization dates.*

Staff are asked to get this information ready to share with the Division over the next week or so.



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Q. When does the order take effect?

A. *Effective dates and all other details will soon be announced. Workers are expected to be fully immunized no later than late October 2021.*

Q. If I have a medical reason for not getting vaccinated, what should I do?

A. *The public health order was developed with input from medical experts in various medical specialties including oncology, allergy, immunology, transplant medicine, neurology, obstetrics, etc., to ensure the policy is fair to all, including those with medical concerns about vaccination.*

Expert opinion was provided, based on existing and evolving evidence and clinical practice, about whether there are patient populations that cannot be immunized for medical reasons. It was determined that medical exemptions are not warranted for the COVID-19 vaccine. There are specific situations, however, where vaccination may be delayed, typically no longer than three months. Please connect with your health care provider for more information.

Q. Can I refuse to be vaccinated for personal or religious reasons?

A. *The policy offers a choice between immunization and testing. Public health must accommodate those who cannot receive a vaccine to the point of undue hardship, and the Division will support employees to get vaccinated and help to work around any obstacles or access issues.*

Q. Is it a human rights violation to require vaccination as a condition of employment? What are the ethical implications here?

A. *In law, discrimination is defined as treating a person differently on the basis of some characteristic that goes to the root of who they are as a human being (where there is no reasonable cause to do so), such as age, race, sexual orientation, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, disability, etc.*

Vaccination requirements are not discriminatory in Manitoba or Canada. Public health laws may restrict our freedoms, but are temporary and with justification behind them, are not venturing into the realm of discrimination.

Q. What if I don't want to be vaccinated because it's my body, and my choice?

A. *Many public servants are public facing employees who directly serve the public. As such, many are at a higher risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19, starting transmission chains that will affect those at greater risk.*

While people do have the right to choose not to get vaccinated, they also have a professional and personal responsibility to help protect public health. If they refuse to be vaccinated, they will have to undergo regular COVID-19 testing to help mitigate the risk.

Q. Why is government doing this now?

A. *For many months, there was a limited supply of the vaccine. Once more vaccine arrived, there was very good uptake. But now, the delta variant is changing things. This pandemic is quickly becoming one of the unvaccinated. We want to make sure as many people as possible, particularly those under 12 who may not yet be able to get vaccinated, are protected. This is a step we can take to make this happen.*

We thank you for your co-operation and patience as we navigate these additional public health orders.

Kind regards,
Roza Gray, Superintendent