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|  | Vaccination policy |
| | Policy Category: Health and Safety |
| | Date Created: December 2021 |
| | Policy Name: HS26 Staff Vaccination Policy |

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe workplace and protect everyone from the potential exposure to infectious diseases where vaccinations are available, and to set criteria for when vaccination is required for particular roles.

The policy aligns with ECE Licensing Criteria GMA7 requiring suitable human resource management policies and procedures to be in place; and HS26, which states:

“All practicable steps are taken to ensure that children do not come into contact with any person (adult or child) on the premises who is suffering from a disease or condition likely to be passed onto children and likely to have a detrimental effect on them.”

Position Statement

Our responsibility is to keep children, staff and the community safe. Where vaccinations are available to staff, we require key staff in roles that regularly work closely with children to be vaccinated.

Our obligations

Part of our kaitiakitanga and responsibility is caring for and keeping everyone safe in our centres.

We have a legal obligation under the ECE Licensing Criteria to take all practicable steps to protect children in our care from coming into contact with any person who may be suffering from an infectious disease, where that could be passed onto them and where it is likely to have a detrimental effect on them.

We also have broader health and safety duties to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of our staff, children, and other people who come into contact with us.

All staff have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to comply with reasonable health and safety instructions.

The risk of transmission of infectious diseases to staff, children and others is included in our centre's Hazard and Risk Register.

Policy

1. Our centre strongly encourages all staff to receive vaccinations to protect themselves and others from infectious diseases.
2. We respect all staff's right to choose whether they receive vaccinations, however the safety of our staff and children is a priority.

3. Roles which have regular and close contact with children are considered "**vaccination required roles**". This includes: all staff; and any volunteer roles.
4. We consider vaccination is necessary for these roles because:
 - a. The nature of our workplace means that usual safety precautions for protecting our staff and children against the risk of infectious disease are not practical for staff working in these roles. For example, these staff cannot 'social distance' from children and in many circumstances, personal protective equipment (PPE) will not be appropriate or suitable.
 - b. Staff in these roles will continue to be required during elevated risk periods, for example, where there is a local outbreak of an infectious disease in our community. For example, during COVID-19 alert level three we typically remained open. It is also important that we have sufficient staff available to maintain adult-child ratios during these periods.
 - c. Staff in these roles cannot work from home and fully undertake their duties. These roles are required to be on the floor to teach and care for children. While there are a few tasks that can sometimes be completed from home (for example, completing learning stories), these tasks are limited.
5. Staff who work in vaccination required roles are required to be vaccinated (including periodic boosters and variations) for infectious diseases listed below where there is a vaccination available, unless an exemption has been granted by the Centre Manager (set out further below). Vaccination is required to ensure we are meeting our obligations to protect our staff, children and communities from the risk of infectious diseases. We also need to ensure our centre can continue to operate and support our community during elevated risk periods and maintain adult-child ratios during these periods.
6. The following vaccinations (including periodic boosters and variations) are required:
 - a. COVID-19
 - b. Measles
 - c. Influenza
7. Where there is a cost to be vaccinated, our centre will meet that cost up to a maximum of \$50 per person upon presentation of a suitable receipt.
8. To assist with our employment and health and safety planning, we may request evidence that staff have received the above vaccinations (i.e. a doctor's medical certificate confirming vaccination). If staff do not wish to provide evidence, we will assume they have not been vaccinated.
9. If a staff member who works in a vaccination required role is unwilling or unable to receive the required vaccines or does not provide proof of having received the required vaccines, and the Centre Manager has not granted an exemption from this policy, we will need to consider other options (see 'Exemptions').
10. As a reminder, staff who are unwell should not come to work. They may be asked to provide a medical certificate to account for their absence from work. We recommend if any staff have questions concerning this policy, they consult with the Centre Manager in the first instance. If they have questions concerning the relevant vaccine, they should consult their General Practitioner or Healthline on 0800 611 116.

Exemptions

There may be circumstances in which staff in vaccination required roles are unwilling or unable to receive a vaccine, for example, for medical reasons or because of their religious beliefs.

If a staff member in a vaccination required role believes they cannot be vaccinated, they must discuss this with the Centre Manager. The Centre Manager will consider the circumstances and whether the staff member can be exempted from the policy.

The Centre Manager will consider the circumstances of any request on its merits, including the nature of the staff member's work, the risk to the staff member and others, the risk of transmission, and the Centre's ability to make reasonable accommodations, without unreasonable disruption to the Centre.

The Centre Manager will consult with the staff member and consider whether there are reasonable accommodations that can be made. Reasonable accommodations could include amending their tasks, an agreed leave plan if there is a local outbreak of an infectious disease, or other safety precautions. These accommodations will need to be balanced against any disruptions to the Centre or our services.

Where the Centre Manager is satisfied that reasonable accommodations can be made, without unreasonable disruption to the Centre and our services, and the risk to health and safety can be appropriately managed, an exemption may be granted.

Where the Centre Manager does not consider that an exemption can be granted, they will work with the individual directly on any other alternative options, however, this may result in termination of employment as a last resort.

Privacy

Staff can expect their privacy to be maintained.

All information gathered about staff vaccination is collected and used for the purpose of implementing this policy and achieving its objectives and will comply with the Privacy Act 2020. For employment and health and safety planning, information about a staff-members vaccination status may be disclosed to Jayne on a "need to know" basis. Their vaccination status will not otherwise be made public to other staff, parents, or others, except with their prior consent or if permitted by law.

Alignment with Other Policies

This policy aligns with:

- HS25 Accident and Illness Policy
- HS26 Infectious Diseases Policy
- Health and Safety Framework Policy
- Privacy Policy

Relevant Background (including Legislation/Regulation/Licensing references)

- [ECE Licensing criteria HS26](#)

- [Worksafe's advice on keeping people well at work](#)
- [MBIE's advice for employers](#)
- [Information on the COVID-19 vaccine in New Zealand](#)

Impacts of Policy on Staff, Parents, Children

Keeping children, staff and our community safe and well in times of an outbreak can be a challenge, but essential if we want to ensure we maintain a healthy workforce with sufficient staff to meet our community's needs.

Alignment with the Centre Philosophy

This policy is aligned with our centre philosophy of holding mana mokopuna (children), mana wairoa (holistic health and wellbeing), and mana tangata (relationships with people) at the heart of what we do to ensure that children have success with us

Implications and/or Risks

If we do not take this firm line on vaccination expectations, we are at risk of not discharging our health and safety duties, failing to maintain regulatory ratios and compliance requirements (particularly, during elevated risk periods), making children in our care unwell, the risk of closure (either temporary or permanent) and viability.

Implementation

All staff will be consulted on this policy before it is implemented or amended will be made aware of this policy.

Review

Review annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

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| Authorised: | Jayne Dahlberg |
| Date: | December 2021 |
| Review Date: | December 2022 |
| Consultation Undertaken: | |