

Report to the Board of Education (PUBLIC)

DATE: October 18, 2021
FROM: Scott Robinson, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination Policies

This report is provided to the Board of Education for information purposes. No further action on behalf of the Board is required at this time.

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination Policies.

BACKGROUND:

On October 22nd, the Ministry of Education released the [K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination Policies](#) which were developed by an Advisory Committee comprised of Ministry and K-12 education sector representatives. The purpose of the Guidelines document is to provide boards of education with a policy development process should an individual board decide that it wishes to consider developing a mandatory employee COVID-19 vaccination policy.

The guidelines were developed in accordance with three guiding principles:

- *Prioritizing health and safety-* A safe environment for students and staff supports learning and development.
- *Reducing impacts to in-person learning-* Minimizing school closures and disruptions (i.e. self-isolation periods).
- *Consistency in approach-* Working collaboratively on policy/procedure development and implementation while acknowledging that different regions, districts, and schools may have different needs.

SUMMARY OF THE GUIDELINES:

Step One- Gather data and evidence in alignment with privacy rules:

- Gather data, either through existing public health data and/or through a voluntary employee self-disclosure in order to determine the approximate number of employees who are currently vaccinated
- Analyze data by employee group in order to determine, as closely as possible, the potential implications of a vaccine policy on the delivery of educational programs and district operations
- Review existing staffing complements including replacement employee availability
- *Once a Board has established this data, it could either decide to stop the process at that stage or proceed to Step Two.*

Step Two- Confirm alignment with legal advice, public health guidance and Orders:

- Ensure that a potential vaccine policy is in alignment with legal advice, Charter rights, human rights legislation, employment law, and health and public health guidance or Orders

- Consult with Medical Health Officers and local health authorities in order to obtain advice on effectiveness of vaccine policies and provide information on local epidemiology patterns, patterns of transmission and community vaccine coverage
- Ensure draft policy is in alignment with existing health and safety requirements and provincial health Orders
- *After seeking advice from local public health officials and confirming that a potential policy was in alignment as discussed above, a Board could either stop the process at that stage, revise the draft policy if necessary and/ or proceed to Step Three.*

Step Three- Consult with employee groups and First Nations and engage the community:

- Consult with employee groups including Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees
- Review collective agreements
- Review applicable human resources and labour relations policies
- Consult with local First Nations (as applicable).
- Engage with District Advisory Council and broader community to understand potential implications.
- *After engaging in this consultation process, a Board would then proceed to Step Four.*

Step Four- Board decides whether to create a proof of vaccination policy and announces decision:

- At an in-camera meeting, the Board would consider whether or not it wished to implement a vaccine policy
- Announce decision publicly including a timeline for implementation
- If a decision was made to approve and implement a policy, the Board would communicate that the intent in developing the policy is to promote health and safety for all students and staff and minimize educational disruption
- Adopt the provincial safety procedure when finalized by BCPSEA
- Encourage unvaccinated staff to become vaccinated where possible and provide enough time for unvaccinated staff to become vaccinated
- Confirm date by which all employees must become vaccinated

Step Five- Implement operational plan

- Confirm consistent process for assessing proof of vaccination
- Implement policy and monitor compliance

CONCLUSION:

The K-12 Sector Guidelines for Vaccination Policies are intended to provide boards of education wishing to consider implementing an employee vaccination policy with a clear roadmap to ensure that any potential policy is informed by the established guiding principles and public health advice, and is in alignment with legal advice, Charter rights, human rights and existing employment and labour law as well as current public health and safety guidelines/Orders.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Robinson
Superintendent of Schools