

Friday, 8 October 2021

Dear Parents

RE: COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Directions (No 5)

I write to advise that the Victorian Government has announced that COVID-19 vaccinations will be mandatory in schools and early childhood centres. This announcement outlines how the Government's mandate will impact on our St Catherine's School community, particularly staff and parents. Please note the Health Directions below:

The [COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Directions \(No 5\)](#) (Health Directions) set out the steps that schools must take in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 in school settings. These steps include:

- collecting, recording and holding vaccination information regarding staff who may work on school premises;
- preventing unvaccinated staff from working on school premises, except in limited circumstances; and
- ensuring that personal protective equipment is worn by staff in specific situations.

Please note that in practice, the Health Directions will have the following impact:

- Staff who are unvaccinated will not be able to attend work from 18 October 2021, unless they have a medical contraindication or have made a booking to receive a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination by 25 October 2021 (in which case they must wear PPE at all times, which at a minimum includes a surgical mask and a face shield).
- Staff must be fully vaccinated by 29 November 2021, unless they have a medical contraindication.
- Where the School does not hold vaccination information about a member of staff, the School must treat the staff member as unvaccinated.

What do the Health Directions mean for you?

Please note that Health Directions apply not only to employees and contractors, but to our wonderful volunteers who so willingly give up their time, who attend St Catherine's School and work in close proximity to children, students or staff. This includes parent volunteers.

In order to comply with these directions, if you wish to continue volunteering at St Catherine's School whilst the Health Directions are in operation, it will be necessary for you to provide details regarding your vaccination status (including proof of vaccination or booking, or evidence of any relevant medical contraindication.)

If the School does not have evidence that by 18 October 2021 you are fully vaccinated, or that you will have received your first dose by 25 October and be fully vaccinated by 29 November, or that you have a medical contraindication, unfortunately, you will not be permitted to volunteer at St Catherine's School whilst the Health Directions remain in force.

These restrictions apply to volunteer activities only. Families may still attend the School for drop off and pick up, although we ask that families refrain from entering the school grounds where practicable to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the school community.

What if you have a medical contraindication?

If you have a medical contraindication, you should not attend or work at St Catherine's School until your exemption status has been approved in writing.

How do you provide proof of a vaccination or booking, or medical contraindication?

You can provide the School with evidence of your vaccination status (including proof of vaccination or booking, or evidence of any relevant medical contraindication) by emailing our School Nurses, Anne Quirk or Sally Jack prior to entering the campus. Their email is: Nurses@stcatherines.net.au

Evidence of vaccination status can include:

- A vaccination certificate or other evidence from a vaccine provider
- An immunisation history statement which can be accessed from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app
- A statement of your vaccination history which you can request from the Australian Immunisation Register
- A record from a health practitioner

In order to comply with the Health Directions, the School is collecting vaccination information and also to enable us to manage the risks to staff, students and the school community arising from COVID-19 including preparing for any possible future outbreaks.

When collecting vaccination information, the School will comply with its *Privacy Policy*, which is available on our School website.

Please be assured that vaccination information will be securely stored and kept confidential and will only be accessible to people who are required to access it. You can request to access your vaccination record information at any time and can also request that any relevant updates are made to it.

Please note that St Catherine's School is required to provide access to vaccination information to an Authorised Officer under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic) if requested to demonstrate compliance with the Health Directions.

How will Victoria's Roadmap affect ELC parents?

Currently, St Catherine's ELC is open to vulnerable and children of single parents and Authorised Workers. However, *Victoria's Roadmap: Delivering the National Plan* indicates that the Victorian Government intends that:

- ELCs will be open for children with fully vaccinated parent(s) once 70 per cent of the Victorian population aged 16+ are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The indicative date for this to occur is 26 October 2021.
- Once 80 per cent are fully vaccinated, ELCs will fully open. The indicative date for this to occur is 5 November 2021.

St Catherine's School is currently awaiting further details regarding the Victorian Government's Health Directions in relation to the mandatory vaccination requirements for ELC parents. The School will share further information about these requirements, and any exemptions which apply, when the relevant Health Directions have been released.

I appreciate that the above measures, which St Catherine's School is taking to comply with the Health Directions and otherwise minimise the transmission of COVID-19 in the school community, will have a bearing on the way the School and staff interact with you. I also acknowledge that members of our school community will understandably have different views regarding the Health Directions.

We are working together to minimise disruption and ensure that the education and safety of our students remains our priority during this challenging time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Director of Business, Mike Zammit.

Thank you for your continued support to our School and your patience and understanding over the last two years as we navigate our way towards coming out of lockdown.

Yours sincerely
Michelle Carroll
Principal