



COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

People and Culture

Please note: This policy reflects government and community rules and guidelines effective from 12 January 2022. Management of COVID-19 is constantly changing. Updated guidance may be issued that supersedes this version of the policy.

Introduction

Learning Links has an obligation under the *Work, Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW) to provide a safe environment for its staff, clients and other stakeholders by:

- Eliminating so far as reasonably practicable, or otherwise minimising, the risk of transmission within Learning Links and across the wider community.
- Supporting physical and mental wellbeing.
- Ensuring the organisation can maintain usual operational levels.

Governments have a national and state strategy for vaccination roll-out that strongly encourages individuals to access a safe, effective, and free COVID-19 vaccine for their own and community protection.

Our organisation follows government advice regarding COVID-19 Vaccination mandates and related requirements.

Eligibility

This Policy applies to all staff employed by Learning Links. The term staff also applies to students, interns, and volunteers. This policy also applies to workers carrying out work on behalf of Learning Links (e.g., contractors).

Policy

Learning Links COVID-19 Vaccination Policy is responsive to state and federal government directions to support the community from COVID-19 outbreaks and future physical, social, and economic disruptions.

Learning Links requires all staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to ensure that programs can continue to be delivered safely at our centres and in schools and community venues. Changes to the mandatory vaccination regulations require staff to have boosters for COVID-19.

In conjunction with Learning Links stance above, several government directions are currently in place and are applicable to Learning Links. The following staff are mandated to be fully vaccinated by to be able to continue to work in the relevant services/programs:

- Early Childhood Education and Care services
- Professionals providing disability support services, including services provided under the NDIS
- Staff working in NSW schools (across all educational jurisdictions)
- Health care workers

Staff are required under NSW Public Health Orders to be fully vaccinated to allow services to be delivered and to comply with the COVID-19 Safety Plans of the respective venues in which they deliver services.

As staff work flexibly across multiple locations, schools and services and provide face to face services, staff may have close contact with people who are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of COVID-19, and it will not be possible to meet these mandates in a safe way without requiring all staff (i.e., mandated or not mandated) to be vaccinated.

To protect the health and safety of clients and staff at Learning Links, we require where possible, staff, clients, contractors, volunteers, and visitors to our sites to be fully vaccinated when entering a site and/or participating in services.

	<p>Proof of vaccination may be requested on entry. This can be in a digital format (i.e., by scanning a QR code or showing the COVID Digital Certificate) or hard copy format (i.e., Immunisation History Statement.)</p>
<p>Medical contraindications and other concerns</p>	<p>Individual staff with a medical contraindication that excludes them from being able to receive COVID-19 vaccinations, must obtain and provide their COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Contraindication certificate from a registered medical practitioner, completed on the approved NSW Government form.</p> <p>In addition, a COVID-19 digital certificate must be provided to confirm the medical contraindication has been registered and processed by the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).</p> <p>Where possible, prior advice of a medical contraindication should be provided before entering a Learning Links centre or completing work on behalf of Learning Links.</p> <p>Additional safety protocols and testing may apply We will consult with individuals if this applies.</p> <p>Our organisation understands that individual staff may have concerns about receiving a COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., concerns that are not related to a medical contraindication). We will consult with these staff individually.</p> <p>Learning Links requests that COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates/ Statements for staff members/ workers are emailed to or sighted by peopleandculture@learninglinks.org.au.</p>
<p>Vaccination appointments, leave and payments</p>	<p>Staff are encouraged to access COVID-19 vaccination appointments during work hours. COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots are available through NSW Health clinics and participating general practices or pharmacies, with medical consent.</p> <p>Learning Links offers permanent staff a total of two hours paid leave to attend appointments for COVID vaccinations. This leave will not be deducted from accrued Annual, Personal or Long Service Leave or any other leave balance and will be paid following evidence of the dose being administered</p> <p>Learning Links offers casual staff a paid flat rate, in lieu of leave, to have their COVID-19 vaccination. This will be paid following evidence of the dose having been administered.</p> <p>Staff who are a close contact or receive a positive COVID-19 test result, can use personal leave (and/ or other leave types) to rest and recover. Additional to this, there may be an entitlement through Services Australia to support payments.</p>
<p>Purpose of collecting information</p>	<p>The purpose of collecting vaccination/ immunisation records is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an understanding of the vaccination status of Learning Links staff in order to protect the health and safety of all clients and staff at Learning Links, • Manage health, safety and wellbeing and minimise the risk of exposure in the workplace. • Provide assurance to members of the community and complete rostering where a request is made to have services delivered by someone who is vaccinated, and • Proactively engage with schools, clubs, clients, and the community about our services. <p>Collection of this information is not required by law but is requested, with your consent. Once collected, vaccination/ immunisation records form part of your employee record.</p> <p>Learning Links staff are required to provide evidence of their current COVID-19 vaccination certificate for storage in their confidential employee file, including providing evidence of having the booster dose.</p>

<p>Record-keeping and privacy.</p>	<p>Staff are advised to always retain their COVID-19 Vaccination certificate digitally or in hard copy. Learning Links will remain fully compliant with relevant privacy laws with respect to the collection, use, storage and handling of personal or health information regarding employee vaccination records (or relevant exemption obtained).</p> <p>We limit the use and disclosure of employee vaccination status information to what is necessary to manage risk in relation to COVID-19 in order to be able to continue to provide services and prepare for a post-COVID recovery. Your vaccination status is sensitive information, forms part of your employee record and will only be disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis.</p> <p>Staff can access and update their information at any time by contacting People and Culture via email on peopleandculture@learninglinks.org.au.</p> <p>Our Privacy Policy can be accessed below in the resources section, via the website (LINK) or staff hub.</p>
<p>Communication, training, and support</p>	<p>Learning Links adopts a collaborative approach to decision-making and values staff feedback in relation to maintaining a COVID-safe organisation by developing safety plans, procedures, policy, and providing information and updates on resourcing.</p> <p>Consultation is conducted and information updated regularly via staff briefings, team meetings, induction/ onboarding processes, staff emails, dedicated staff/ manager information sessions, as well as individual discussions with staff members.</p> <p>Before implementing this policy, Learning Links considered health, legal and employment law advice.</p>
<p>Related documents</p>	<p>Related Policies and Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Policy • COVID-19 Procedure • Recruitment Policy and Procedure • Privacy Policy • Work, Health and Safety Policy
<p>Review</p>	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed as required in response to legislative change or NSW Health advice and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>Policy Date: 12 January 2022 Policy Review: 12 January 2024 Review by: Manager, People and Culture Approval: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance Version No: 2.0</p>