

<b>Organisation</b>	Lobethal Lutheran School
<b>Policy Title:</b>	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy
<b>Date of Implementation:</b>	1 January 2023
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	Term 4 2023 or if there is a significant change in circumstances

## BACKGROUND

Lobethal Lutheran School is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of staff members, volunteers and students, while they are at our school.

Lobethal Lutheran School has a duty under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* (**WHS Act**) to eliminate, or if that is not reasonably practicable, to minimise the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace so far as is reasonably practicable. This duty is not impacted or lessened by the recent changes to Government requirements relating to isolation or mask-wearing.

Employees and others attending the school also have duties under the WHS Act to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of others; and
- comply with any reasonable instructions, policies and procedure given by the school.

COVID-19 is a highly transmissible respiratory infection that can cause mild illness in most people but can also cause severe illness or death in some cases, particularly for vulnerable people.

COVID-19 continues to have an adverse impact on the South Australian community, including potentially our school. However, the number of new cases in the community has decreased since the peak of the pandemic and treatment options for COVID-19 have improved (including the numbers of approved COVID-19 vaccines and the COVID-19 variants targeted by COVID-19 vaccines).

Lobethal Lutheran School remains concerned about the potential health implications of the spread of COVID-19 within the school, especially for those who are more vulnerable.

The increased absences of staff members and students because they have COVID-19 lessens the ability of our school to provide an optimal learning and caring environment for students.

The current public health advice is that people aged 18 and older are recommended to remain 'up to date' with their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Until 31 March 2022, staff members, contractors and volunteers at our school were required to comply with an Emergency Management Direction from the State Co-ordinator for South Australia on COVID-19 vaccinations in order to be able to perform work in an education setting. The Direction was lifted and our school developed a vaccination policy, which also required vaccination against COVID-19 as a condition of performing work.

Due to a gradual change in circumstances, and with high rates of vaccination in the community more generally, this policy has been developed to replace the initial policy implemented to manage the risk of COVID-19 in our school.

This policy contains the vaccination requirements to apply in our school from the date of implementation of this policy.

This policy will operate subject to any government orders and/or directions that are in place from time to time.

The school will continue to monitor the situation with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic to determine if and when it may be necessary, from a work health and safety perspective, to make any changes to this policy.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all workers performing work at the school including all employees, contractors (and their employees) and volunteers.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

In the current circumstances, this policy is considered reasonable and proportionate to ensure the health and safety of the school and to minimise the risk of disruption to services to our students.

Lobethal Lutheran School has considered a range of factors in developing this policy, including:

- current prevalence of COVID-19 and risk of community transmission in South Australia
- reported COVID-19 cases within the school
- the nature of the school and the duties to be performed
- the degree of contact staff members have with vulnerable populations
- the proportion of staff members who are currently vaccinated against COVID-19

Lobethal Lutheran School has a number of risk control measures in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 in the school, including:

- physical distancing
- supporting community members who choose to wear a mask
- expecting community members to wear a mask, when considered appropriate by the school
- Rapid Antigen Testing, when considered appropriate by the school
- requiring that community members do not attend the school when they are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 (irrespective of whether they have tested positive for COVID-19 or not)
- seeking to optimise ventilation and use of fresh air
- inspecting and reviewing air conditioning and ventilation systems
- provision of hand sanitiser and other sanitation measures

## VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Lobethal Lutheran School recognises that vaccination against COVID-19 remains one of the best available control measures to mitigate against serious illness and hospitalisation from COVID-19.

Current advice from SA Health also notes that being vaccinated against COVID-19 means a person will be less likely to catch COVID-19 and pass it on to others.<sup>1</sup>

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<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/vaccine/information+for/covid-19+vaccination+for+adults>

Accordingly, Lobethal Lutheran School **strongly encourages** all staff members, volunteers, contractors and employees of contractors to maintain an Up-To-Date Vaccination Status against COVID-19, with a COVID-19 vaccine that has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in Term 4 of 2023, or earlier if there is a significant change in circumstances.

## DEFINITIONS

- **ATAGI** means Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.
- **Up-To-Date Vaccination Status** means the definition of 'up-to-date' vaccination status, as defined by ATAGI from time to time in the '*ATAGI statement on defining 'up-to date' status for COVID-19 vaccination*'. The current ATAGI statement is available here: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-defining-up-to-date-status-for-covid-19-vaccination>

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Further information about managing COVID-19 and the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines is available at the websites listed below.

Latest COVID-19 health information from SA Health:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19>

Information from SA Health to assist people to stay COVID-safe:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/staying+covid+safe/staying+covid+safe>

Information from SA Health regarding COVID-19 Vaccines:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/vaccine/get+vaccinated/get+vaccinated>

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care information about the COVID-19 pandemic:

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19>