

TO: QTU MEMBERS

Process for compliance with CHO direction on mandatory vaccinations

The Director-General (DG) has provided all Department of Education (DoE) employees with advice about the need to comply with the CHO direction mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for all employees in high-risk settings. This CHO direction, which will be released in coming days and comes into effect on 17 December, will require:

- (A) a worker in a high-risk setting to have received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 17 December
- (B) a worker in a high-risk setting to have received the prescribed number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine by 11.59pm on 23 January 2022.

(NB: Schools will be identified as high-risk settings for the purpose of the CHO direction)

The department has finalised a process to enable employees to upload all relevant evidence, which it advises is compliant with privacy and information security requirements. This process is contained in the DG's message sent out this afternoon.

Failure to comply with the CHO direction

Teachers and school leaders, along with other school staff, have until 7 January 2022 to provide the department with evidence that they have received at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This is the last possible date members can receive the initial dose of the vaccine and comply with the CHO direction.

Failure to provide this evidence will result in the department commencing a process that will include school staff being asked to show cause as to why they should not be suspended without pay. Given the need to provide schools with certainty in staffing in the lead up to student free days in 2022, this show-cause process will commence on 10 January 2022.

Should school staff not be able to provide a reasonable explanation (i.e. medical evidence of a medical contraindication to being vaccinated or extenuating circumstances), the department may suspend them without pay and commence disciplinary processes to examine why they should not have their employment terminated.

If you haven't received the survey, please ensure that your contact details in MyHR (ESS) are up to date, including your personal email and mobile phone numbers. If you have any complex inquiries you should direct them to: staffvaccinationstatus@qed.qld.gov.au.

QTU legal assistance in show cause process

Members may be able to access QTU legal assistance in the show cause process. If you require this assistance, please contact the Union by emailing qtu@qtu.asn.au. Eligible members will then be provided with details of how to gain this legal support (you must be a financial member of the Union at the time that you request legal assistance).

The QTU's offices will be closed from 23 December until 6 January 2022. Members who are unable to comply with the CHO direction and vaccination mandate are encouraged to seek QTU assistance prior to the Christmas shutdown or once our offices reopen.

Impact of CHO direction on members on leave

Teachers and school leaders, along with other school staff, who are on leave from the start of Term 1 2022 will not be required to provide evidence of their vaccination status within the timeframes outlined above. However, you will be required to provide evidence of your vaccination status before your leave ends and you expect to return to school.

DoE employees with medical or other extenuating circumstances

If you have medical or other extenuating circumstances, applications for exemptions will be assessed by central office.

Employees who have a medical exemption or are being assessed for medical reasons (who are not on employee accrued leave) will need to provide medical evidence of these grounds and indicate this on the survey sent to all employees.

Information about medical exemptions as identified by ATAGI and processes to apply for them can be found on the [Services Australia website](#).

Teachers and school leaders in remote or regional communities living in teacher accommodation

The QTU has been advised that once the CHO direction takes effect on 17 December, it will be a requirement of your employment that you comply with the mandate and are vaccinated (unless an exemption is granted).

If you choose not to be vaccinated (i.e. you are not an exempt employee but have determined that you do not want to have the COVID vaccine), the department will proceed to a show-cause termination process. If this process results in your termination from the department, you will lose the right to continue to reside in teacher accommodation, and as such will be required to move out.

It is important to note that, upon termination, the department is not required to provide you with transfer expenses to assist you to relocate.

The QTU is currently advocating for the department to consider individual member circumstances when making determinations about support for relocation.

Other CHO directions

Members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with other CHO directions that have the potential to impact on them. These include the [Public Health and Social Measures](#) Linked to Vaccination Status Direction, which will come into effect on 17 December. This direction may have an impact on members' plans and activities over the holidays (and into the 2022 school year). The QTU is currently seeking clarification about the potential impact of this direction on activities for senior secondary students over the age of 16 when they return to school in 2022.

As most QTU events, including training and conferences, fall into one of the categories contained in the direction, members attending Union events will be required to meet the conditions of the direction and be fully vaccinated.

End of 2021 school year

Tomorrow marks the end of the 2021 school year. The pandemic has continued to provoke uncertainty and has continued to impact upon member workload and wellbeing. Despite this, QTU members have continued to show up and do all they can to provide the best learning opportunities for their students and school communities.

You have also worked hard to have a voice in the QTU, ensuring that we have finalised the claim for EB10, participated in the NAPLAN campaign, and have been strong advocates for our profession. Next year will see the final implementation of the current agreement and the commencement of negotiations for its replacement. It will also see us continuing to celebrate all that our profession does and calling on governments to make decisions with and for the profession (rather than doing things to our profession).

With the school year ending tomorrow, the QTU urges members to exercise professional discretion in how they apply the right to disconnect. It is reasonable to expect that the department will use email to communicate with employees on matters arising from the CHO mandate.

Processes in relation to the mandate were shared in today's DG message. During the holidays, members should keep an eye out for an email about the expectations for following the CHO mandate, and respond as necessary. Emails on all other matters should be met with an out-of-office response, stating that you will not be responding during your period of annual leave. Members can access information and advice by contacting QTAD on 1300 117 823 or via the [QTU website](#).

We hope all members have a safe, restful and joy-filled holiday and come back refreshed when the school year recommences in 2022.

Authorised by:

Kate Ruttiman
General Secretary