

CHAPTER TWO: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Approval Date: April 2021

Policy: **COVID VACCINATION POLICY**

Policy Number: 2.5.8

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines, policies and procedures in regards to the COVID Vaccination for all employees.

Policy

- 1.0 It is Child Care Algoma's preference to have all employees receive their COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. Employees will be eligible to receive their first dose of vaccine during Phase 2 of Ontario's vaccination plan. A second dose will be required (based on vaccine availability at this time and the types administered), which will be 4 months from receiving the first dose. It would be preferred that all employees are vaccinated as soon as possible based on vaccine allotment and appointment availability.
- 2.0 Employees not medically eligible to take the vaccine or unable to vaccinate due to religious purposes are asked to provide documentation in regards to this as per the Employment Health Assessment and Immunization Record Policy 2.4, *"If an employee objects in writing to providing an immunization record on the grounds the immunization conflicts with sincerely held beliefs of the employee based on religion or conscience or a qualified medical practitioner gives medical reasons in writing as to why the person should not be immunized, Child Care Algoma will waive receipt of an immunization record. Child Care Algoma will inform the exempted employee that, if exposure to a vaccine-preventable illness occurs, they will be considered an infectious risk (both to themselves and to children) and may be excluded until the risk of infection has passed or Algoma Public Health declares an outbreak over. Flexibility may be granted to the employee to use sick, vacation or time off without pay in these circumstances"*.
- 3.0 Booking vaccinations will be the responsibility of the employee as availability of the vaccination for Child Care staff arises. Child Care Algoma asks that when possible, staff book vaccination appointments during lunch breaks, evenings and weekends on their own time. Flexibility for lunch breaks will be provided as available. Employees are to speak with their Site Supervisor/Coordinator to organize as may be necessary. Child Care Algoma asks that staff provide a copy of their vaccination record to be placed in their permanent staff file. Once available, appointments can be booked online at: <https://www.algomapublichealth.com/disease-and-illness/infectious-diseases/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/vaccine-clinics-in-algoma/>

If you have questions specifically related to the vaccine itself you can call Ontario's Vaccine Information phone line: [1-888-999-6488](tel:1-888-999-6488)

Please visit the website below to learn about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, how they work and possible side effects.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-safety>

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Procedures

- 1.0 COVID-19 vaccine clinics to include Child Care staff are expected to begin in the coming months. Similar to medications and other vaccines, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines can cause side effects. Common side effects for the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine include pain at injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, and diarrhea. Common side effects for the Moderna vaccine include pain at injection site, fatigue, headache, myalgia, chills, nausea/vomiting, axillary swelling and tenderness (enlarged lymph nodes). Some of these side effects are also symptoms that are compatible with COVID-19. Possible side effects of other vaccinations can be found on the following website: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-safety>

There are a select number of **mild non-respiratory symptoms** compatible with COVID-19 that are also side effects of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. If an employee, or household member of a child or employee experiences **headache, fatigue, muscle aches or joint pain** (must be mild in nature) within **48 hours after vaccination**, the employee and child can continue to attend the child care centre.

However, if the headache, fatigue, muscle aches or joint pain is **severe in nature, lasts longer than 48 hours after vaccination or the vaccine recipient experiences any other COVID-19 symptom** after vaccination, the employee and/or child must be excluded from the child care centre. The symptomatic employee is only able to return to the child care centre if:

- a. They consult with a medical professional and receive an alternative diagnosis, or
- b. They seek COVID-19 testing and receive a negative test result, or
- c. They stay home and isolate for 10 days following their symptom onset

A child who lives with a symptomatic vaccine recipient shall only return to the child care centre when their symptomatic household member:

- a. Receives a negative COVID-19 test result or an alternative diagnosis from a health care provider, or
- b. If the symptomatic vaccine recipient chooses to do neither of the above noted options, the child must remain home for 14 days after their last contact with the symptomatic household member

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- 2.0 As per Ministry of education and Ministry of Health direction employees and essential visitors will need to continue to wear masks and face shields after being vaccinated for COVID-19. It is very important to remember that individuals need to continue to follow public health advice even after they receive their COVID-19 vaccine. At this time, there is no information on the long-term protection with the vaccine. There is a small chance that individuals may still contract COVID-19 after being vaccinated. It is still important for everyone to continue with public health measures such as wearing a mask, physical distancing, washing hands often, and staying home when sick until vaccines are more widely available and we can be sure that the vaccine prevents the spread of most COVID-19 infections. Child care staff and essential visitors must continue to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) even after they have been vaccinated.