



ST JOHNS PAPATOETOE
Connecting with God and Community

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Covid-19 Vaccination Policy

1 December 2021

Policy Statement

Our session is committed to ensuring that St Johns Papatoetoe is a safe and healthy working environment for all workers, anyone who is part of our church community and anyone who comes among us. In the name of Christ, we are committed to keeping the people around us safe, particularly those who are vulnerable.

As Christians, we seek the Holy Spirit's wisdom and take the best advice we can as we decide how best to keep people as safe as possible from COVID-19.

Under New Zealand's health and safety laws, employers are required to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of both workers and others at the workplace. This duty extends to the COVID-19 pandemic, where employers must eliminate or if that is not possible minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of exposure to infection from COVID-19 in the workplace. The COVID-19 vaccine is an important additional safety measure being provided by the NZ Government, that will assist organisations, including our church, to continue providing a safe and healthy work environment.

The Presbyterian Church also has requirements relating to health and safety, as set out in its *Conditions of Service Manual*, namely, paragraph 2.5ff applying to ministers and church councils and paragraphs 4.3ff applying to church councils and volunteers.

Objectives of this Policy

- Protect the wellbeing and safety of all church workers, volunteers and people who come into contact with the church.
- Ensure that all workers and volunteers who can be vaccinated, are.
- Ensure this church remains operational and can fulfil its essential functions.
- Carry out a risk assessment for relevant roles within the church

Do all church workers and volunteers need to be vaccinated?

Our church council requires that all workers and volunteers who can, are vaccinated as part of New Zealand's fight against COVID-19. Vaccination reduces the chance of infected individuals developing symptoms and illness, reduces the severity of symptoms, and potentially reduces transmissibility.

Vaccination will be one of the main tools for the church council's response to help provide a healthy and safe workplace and ensure our church can continue to perform its essential functions.

The church council can require that certain work must only be done by vaccinated workers, where there is high risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 to others and/or Government mandates apply. These are roles or tasks with:

- A higher-than-normal probability of a worker being exposed to COVID-19 whilst performing the role; and
- Where there is significant risk of spreading infection to vulnerable individuals, including co-workers and the wider community.

Exemptions

Exemptions from the above policy requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, for example exemptions may be considered if a worker or volunteer has a medical condition that prevents them from safe vaccination. It should be noted that under Health and Safety legislation the church may need to place their worker and stakeholder health and safety ahead of any concerns about religious or cultural beliefs.

We will work with any worker or volunteer who cannot or chooses not to be vaccinated to understand their reasons, and any potential implications for their role. This may include re-deployment to another role (temporarily or permanently). If there are no other options, then the worker or volunteer may no longer be able to continue in their role.

Our expectations of others

We require new workers and volunteers to be fully vaccinated if they haven't yet been, prior to commencing their role. Again, if anyone has specific reasons why they cannot be vaccinated or chose not to be vaccinated, this will be discussed with them on a case-by-case basis.

It is important that all employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors comply with our safety policies and accept responsibility for their individual actions and responsibilities in helping us achieve a COVID safe workplace. This extends to the availability and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination as per this policy, and all other measures which have been implemented to reduce the spread of the virus, e.g., the use of PPE, hand washing, wearing of masks, social distancing etc. Additionally, there is a requirement for staff to be tested according to alert level changes and to best practice guidelines determined by our leadership team.

Do I have to disclose to the church whether I've been vaccinated or not?

The church can ask you if you've been vaccinated and may require you to provide evidence of this. We may also keep a record of your vaccination status. You have the right not to disclose your vaccination status. However, if you choose not to say whether you have been vaccinated, the church will assume that you have not been vaccinated.

Any information obtained under this policy will be treated in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

Further Support

Please contact a member of the leadership team if you have any queries or concerns about this policy or any safety issue.