



COVID-19 Vaccination

D/2.1

Purpose

The Synod recognises its role as a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) and the requirements under D1.1 Synod Wide WHS Framework. The Synod is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment so far as is reasonably practicable for all workers (as defined in this policy), regardless of placement or position. The Synod also recognises its responsibilities to provide a safe environment so far as is reasonably practicable for people we serve.

The Synod recognises that COVID-19 is a highly contagious and potentially fatal condition and has developed a risk-based policy and procedure to assist in reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in placements and the Synod office through a COVID-19 vaccination requirement.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees of the Queensland Synod office
- People who are engaged through a contract for the supply of services to the Synod office
- Workers at an early learning site
- Ministry agents
- People in supply ministry

The policy does not apply to:

- Volunteers of the Queensland Synod office (other than a volunteer at an early learning site).
- Lay persons employed in ministry locations, designated as appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of pastor.
- People who supply site maintenance or cleaning services under a contract for the supply of services to the Synod office (other than at an early learning site)

This policy is to be read in a way that is consistent with all relevant government public health orders or legislation (**Government Requirements**), as introduced, amended, replaced or revoked from time to time. Given the constantly changing nature of the advice and directions if any aspect of this policy contravenes any aspect of the Government Requirements, the Government Requirements prevail.

Policy

1. Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination

1.1. The Synod Standing Committee, at their meeting on 4 November 2021, made the following resolution:

It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorse a Synod policy position that mandates vaccination for all people exercising a ministry role in the Queensland Synod and all Synod office staff and staff of Synod enterprises and that the due date for this mandate is 1 February 2022. (Resolution SSC 21.260)



- 1.2. Consistent with Government Requirements announced on 30 November 2021 and the public health direction “COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Workers in a high-risk setting Direction” issued 11 December 2021, all workers at an early learning site (including employees, family day care educators, in home contractors, volunteers, students and people who are engaged through a contract for the supply of services, Alexandra Park Conference Centre) must have had their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 17 December 2021 and a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 11:59pm on 23 January 2022.

2. COVID-19 Risk

- 2.1. The COVID-19 virus has been shown to pose a significant risk to the broader community.
- 2.2. Some people are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19, including:
 - 2.2.1. First Nations people
 - 2.2.2. People over 70 years of age
 - 2.2.3. Chronic conditions requiring medical treatments
 - 2.2.4. Primary or acquired immunodeficiency
 - 2.2.5. Diabetes
 - 2.2.6. Some neurological conditions
 - 2.2.7. Poorly controlled blood pressure
 - 2.2.8. Pregnant people
 - 2.2.9. Severe mental health concerns
- 2.3. Other factors might also increase a risk of severe illness if contracting COVID-19, including:
 - 2.3.1. Age (risk increases as you get older, even for those under 70)
 - 2.3.2. Being male
 - 2.3.3. Poverty
 - 2.3.4. Smoking
- 2.4. The coronavirus’ incubation period, which is the time between when a person is exposed to the virus and when their symptoms first appear, ranges from 1 to 14 days. Most people develop symptoms 5 to 6 days after being in contact with a person with the coronavirus. This means that there is a period where a person may be infected and able to expose other people to the virus before symptoms develop.
- 2.5. Even where there is community transmission of COVID-19, increased vaccination coverage in Australia will allow people, including those at higher risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19, to continue attending work and other settings with appropriate precautions in place where public health restrictions allow. Regardless of age or medical conditions, COVID-19 vaccination reduces an individual’s risk of severe COVID-19. In addition, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is reduced as more people in the community are vaccinated against COVID-19.



3. PCBU Duty of Care

3.1. Provide a safe workplace

3.1.1. The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) places a primary duty of care on a PCBU to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

3.1.1.1. workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by the person; and

3.1.1.2. workers whose activities in carrying out work are influenced or directed by the person; while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking.

3.1.2. A PCBU must also ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking.

3.2. Management of risks

3.2.1. The PCBU is required:

3.2.1.1. to eliminate risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable; and

3.2.1.2. if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks to health and safety, to minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

4. The Synod as a PCBU

4.1. Paragraph 32 of the Constitution provides (in summary) that, subject to the direction of the Assembly, the Synod:

4.1.1. exercises executive and administrative functions within its bounds

4.1.2. establishes and maintains such boards, institutions, committees and agencies as are appropriate to the furtherance of its responsibilities;

4.1.3. may do other things consistent with the purposes of the Church (provided that they are not the exclusive responsibility of another council); and

4.1.4. acts through a Standing Committee (the Synod Standing Committee).

4.2. Regulation 3.1.5 confirms that the Synod:

4.2.1. possesses that inherent power by which it may deal with and dispose of any matter before it for which no precise or sufficient Regulation has been made and the use of such power shall be included in the minutes; and

4.2.2. is responsible for establishing an Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements (to be known as the Placements Committee)

4.3. The Placements Committee:

4.3.1. Is designated to approves placements within the bounds of a Synod (Reg 2.6.3(f)); and

4.3.2. has the responsibility for issuing a call (Reg 2.6.5(a))



4.4. The Synod Office:

4.4.1. is established to provide support to the Moderator, General Secretary and the functioning of the Church. The Synod Office shall be accountable to and under the direction of the General Secretary. The General Secretary shall appoint such staff as are necessary to perform the appropriate management and oversight of the Synod's strategy, mission and resourcing. (By Law Q2.6.1).

4.4.2. The Synod shall appoint a General Secretary (By-Law Q2.4.1(1))

4.5. The Synod exercises responsibility for the management and administration of the Church's functions in Queensland. This would include the management and administration for matters of work health and safety and, accordingly, the Synod is a PCBU.

5. Reasonable and lawful direction

5.1. People who exercise a ministry role and Synod office staff:

5.1.1. may be exposed to COVID-19 in the community or workplace

5.1.2. may be infectious for a period of time before symptoms develop

5.1.3. people who have contact with the public or community members as part of their work may have contact with people who are at greater risk of severe illness of COVID-19, or

5.1.4. may be a person who is at greater risk of severe illness of COVID-19

5.2. The Synod, as a PCBU, has a duty to minimise the risk of COVID-19 so far as reasonably practicable, of workers and other persons.

5.3. The Synod's resolution is a reasonably practicable control measure to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in:

5.3.1. Placements – through the Synod's responsibility to establish a Placements Committees which is designated to approve placements and to issue a call

5.3.2. Positions of the Synod office – through the General Secretary who is appointed by the Synod

Related documents

[D1.1 Synod Wide WHS Framework](#)

[D2.1.1 COVID-19 Vaccination procedure](#)

[D2.1.1.1 COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Application](#)

[People at Higher Risk of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[How COVID-19 vaccines work](#)

[Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\) statement on recommendations for managing COVID-19 health risks](#)

[Symptoms of COVID-19 and how the virus spreads](#)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)



Definitions

Term	Meaning
UCAQld (also called we or us or the Church)	Means the functions and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• within and in relation to the bounds of the Queensland Synod; and• outside the bounds of the Queensland Synod (where managed by parts of the organisation located within the bounds of the Queensland Synod), under the <i>Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Qld)</i> .
Queensland Synod office	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia performed within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College, Alexandra Park Conference Centre and Uniting Education Early Learning.
Early Learning Site	Includes outside school hours care, vacation care, kindergartens and registered and licensed early childhood settings (such as centre based childcare and family day care, in home care), including the early learning operations team of the Synod office and outdoor education facilities (Alexandra Park Conference Centre). It includes a collocated setting which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is not physically separated from the occupied part of the early learning site or• is not secured and delineated so that users and workers of the early learning site cannot enter the collocated setting or• has shared points of access with users and workers of the early learning site or• can be accessed by a person who uses the facilities (eg toilets or lunchroom) in the early learning site.
Employees	Means any person employed by way of a contract of employment by The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.) represented by The Queensland Synod (ABN 25 548 385 225), including full-time, part-time, casual employees, and fixed-term employees.
Workers at an early learning site	Anyone who works in, undertakes an educational placement in, or volunteers at an early learning site including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees• Family Day Care Educators• In Home Care Contractors• People engaged through a contract for the supply of service such as plumbing, electrical, cleaning, gardening and building services• Volunteers who assist in delivering support activities and services (such as a parent, guardian, indigenous elder)• Chaplains or support workers• University students on practical placement• Psychologists or therapists providing support for individuals
Contract for the Supply of Service	A contract entered into between The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.) represented by The Queensland Synod (ABN 25 548 385 225) and an external party for the supply of services to the Synod office, including workers of a Temporary Hire Provider, Independent Contractor, Trainee or Apprenticeship.



Term	Meaning
Family Day Care Educators	Means an independent contractors engaged through an Educator Agreement for the provision of services on behalf of The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.) as the Approved Provider under the National Law (Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) 2011 (Qld) and Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations).
In Home Care Contractors	Means an independent contractor engaged through a contract for the provision of child care services in the family home on behalf of The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.) as the Approved Provider, approved as an In Home Care Service under Family Assistance Law.
Site maintenance or cleaning services	Includes cleaning, rubbish and waste removal, gardening, building repair or trade related services (eg electrical, plumbing, painting)
Volunteer	Means a person donating their time free of charge to the mission and objectives of the Church and recognises that volunteers are not motivated by financial income as a result of their work. It includes a governing body member (if not otherwise classified due to another role) or student (other than a paid trainee/apprentice).
Ministry agent	Includes Uniting Church in Australia candidates, community ministers, deacons, deaconesses, interns, lay pastors, ministers of the word, pastors, youth workers and ministers from other denominations serving in approved placements in the Queensland Synod.
Supply ministry	Supply ministry is used to describe a ministry of short duration, usually extending from a few weeks to twelve months, most commonly when the placement is vacant or the Minister is on extended leave.
Placement	An approved placement (Regulation 2.6.3(a)(i)) in a congregation or other body wherein ministry is exercised
Placements Committee	The body which oversees the list of placements within the Queensland Synod and works together with presbyteries and other bodies within the life of the Synod to ensure that ministry agents are deployed in placements which match their skills and gifts and which meet the particular needs of the ministry agent.
Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU)	A person conducts a business or undertaking: (a) whether alone or with others; (b) whether or not it is for profit or gain; and (c) even if the business or undertaking is conducted as an unincorporated association
Worker	Under the WHS Act, a person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU, including as an employee, a contractor, a sub-contractor, an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, a student, a trainee/apprentice
Workplace	Under the WHS Act, a workplace is a place where work is carried out for the business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. For example, a workplace includes a vehicle or a private residence.
Constitution	The Uniting Church in Australia Constitution
Regulations	The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations



Term	Meaning
By-Law	By-Laws of the Queensland Synod

Revisions

Document number		D/2.1			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
1.2	22.12.2021	General Secretary	13.12.2021	Strategic Risk Manager	WHS Manager
Next scheduled review		01.01.2023			