

Homes Procedural Manual

Number: Label

Date Approved: July 1 2021

Date Revised: March 21 2023

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Services & Long Term Care

DIVISION: Pioneer Ridge

SECTION: COVID-19

Risk Management

SUBJECT: COVID-19 MANDATORY VACCINATION policy

STATEMENT:

Covid-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The risk of severe disease is higher in LTC home residents, those with underlying medical conditions and those who are not immunized.

All Ontario LTC home employers must promote covid-19 immunizations to reduce the risk of severe illness for the most vulnerable population who live in these homes.

Long-term care homes, as employers, retain their ability to mandate vaccination requirements for existing and new staff, students and volunteers, provided they comply with all applicable law, such as the Human Rights Code.

The purpose of this policy is to outline Pioneer Ridge's expectations with regards to covid-19 immunization of staff, students and volunteers.

PROCEDURE:

The home will ensure that all those who apply for employment, student and volunteer opportunities are informed about the current covid-19 vaccination policy.

Prior to commencement of employment, new hires will be required to provide proof of being 'fully vaccinated' against the covid-19 virus.

Those seeking student and volunteer opportunities in the home will not be required to provide proof of covid-19 immunizations, but will be encouraged to remain updated with their vaccines per current public health recommendations.

Students and volunteers who are not 'fully vaccinated' against covid-19 according to the home's definition may be restricted access during a declared outbreak. See outbreak exclusion details below.

Covid-19 booster doses will be offered to all home's employees, students and volunteers when public health recommendations change for residents and employees of LTC homes in Ontario, during scheduled vaccine clinics.

Definition: Fully Vaccinated

For the purpose of this policy, the minimum requirement to be considered 'fully vaccinated' against the covid-19 virus at Pioneer Ridge is:

- An individual must have received their full primary series of covid-19 immunizations plus at least 1 booster dose.

Outbreak exclusion: Students and Volunteers

In the event the home or resident home area is in a declared covid-19 outbreak, students and volunteers who are fully vaccinated against covid-19 with proof of immunization will be permitted to enter the home.

Students and volunteers who are not fully vaccinated against covid-19 may be permitted to provide services in a non-outbreak area of the home, based on the home's prior approval and instruction in order to reduce risk of exposure and spreading illness.

Mandatory employee covid-19 immunization implementation guidelines effective March 31, 2022:

- ANY EXISTING EMPLOYEE OF THE HOME that has not provided proof of being FULLY VACCINATED or a valid Medical Exemption, will be placed on a Leave of Absence without pay and benefits for up to two (2) months commencing on April 1, 2022 (for those eligible for their third dose before or on March 31, 2022).
- For those eligible for their third dose after March 31, 2022, they must provide proof of having received the third dose within 30 days of being eligible, or will be placed on a Leave of Absence without pay and benefits for up to two (2) months commencing on the 31st day past eligibility.
- In accordance with NACI guidance, if an employee contracts COVID-19 before receiving their booster, an extension of 3 months from infection date will be provided. If the employee does not provide proof of having received the third dose within 30 days of being eligible, they will be placed on a Leave of Absence without pay and benefits for up to two (2) months commencing on the 31st day past eligibility.
- While on the above noted unpaid leave, staff will not be eligible to utilize vacation or sick time.
- If at the end of the two (2) month leave, proof of full vaccination or a valid medical exemption is not provided EMPLOYMENT WILL BE TERMINATED for cause.
- If the employee provides proof of full vaccination status within this two (2) month unpaid leave, they will be eligible to return to work once proof of full vaccination has been obtained by the Home.

Employees on approved leaves of absence, including paid sick leave, WSIB, pregnancy and parental leave, or authorized unpaid leave are not required to comply with the above as long as they remain on the approved leave. Employees must comply with this policy prior to their return to work.

Effective March 15, 2022 the policy as outlined above will apply to all employees and all MUST provide one of the following:

- Proof of all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada. *Staff will provide an acceptable copy of their COVID-19 vaccination receipt to the Director of Nursing or designate. This copy will be kept in their confidential employee file with an electronic copy for outbreak planning and surveillance activities. A list of immunized staff will be compiled in the Home by the Director of Nursing with assistance of the Administrative Assistant.*
- Written proof of a medical reason, provided by either a valid Ontario physician or Nurse Practitioner that sets out:
 - i. that the person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19; and
 - ii. the effective time period for the medical reason (i.e. Permanent or time-limited).

If the effective time period of a medical reason provided has expired, Pioneer Ridge management shall ensure, within 30 days of the medical reason expiring, that the individual provides proof of vaccination or an extension from the doctor.

- If proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, or a further extension for a medical leave is not received within the 30 days, employee will be placed on a Leave of Absence without pay and benefits for up to two (2) months commencing on the 31st day past expiration.

- If at the end of the two (2) month leave, proof of being FULLY VACCINATED or another VALID MEDICAL EXEMPTION with a specified time limit is not provided, EMPLOYMENT WILL BE TERMINATED for cause.

Confidentiality Statement

Pioneer Ridge may be asked to share covid-19 immunization data with Ministry of Long-Term Care or Public Health for statistical data collection purposes. No identifying information will be provided to the above parties in relation to immunization status information obtained in relation to this policy; all statistical information will be provided in aggregate form.