COMMISSION SCOLAIRE FRANCOPHONE DES TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST

COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Commission scolaire francophone des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (CSFTNO) COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines have been developed to provide direction and information to supervisors and employees about the implementation of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (Policy) by the CSFTNO. It is also intended to provide employees with the information necessary to arrange for vaccination, if necessary, and to obtain proof of vaccination documentation ahead of the November 30, 2021 implementation date.

Amendments to the Policy have been made to ensure that the GNWT follows evolving best practice standards in management of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to protect employees and members of the public.

POLICY BASE

Each GNWT Department and Agency is required to have their own COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines that are consistent with and support the implementation of the Amended GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the Amended Corporate COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Guidelines.

GNWT education body COVID-19 vaccination guidelines were developed in collaboration with representatives of the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and NWT Education Bodies.

SCOPE

The Policy concerns vaccination against COVID-19, or Coronavirus, an infectious respiratory illness caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2 and any variants), and the implementation of other workplace safety precautions in lieu of vaccination.

This Policy and the present Guidelines apply to all employees of the CSFTNO and all individuals engaged to provide services on behalf of the CSFTNO and its schools. These Policy and Guidelines do not apply to students, and do not apply to parents or guardians unless they are acting in a position of volunteer.

Where regulatory provisions, policy, or guidelines are contradictory, the most protective approach may be employed if it is consistent with the requirements of the current Northwest Territories Safety Act (Safety Act) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations and related legislative and regulatory requirements.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms apply in these Guidelines:

COVID-19 – or Coronavirus disease is an infectious respiratory illness caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Deputy Head – the deputy minister of a department, the chief executive officer of a public committee, board or council, or such a person as may be appointed or designated as Deputy Head. For Education Bodies, the Deputy Head is the Superintendent.

Employees – means all members of the public service as defined by the *Public Service Act*.

Contractors – means all individuals, including contracted secretary treasurers, who are engaged to provide services with remuneration on behalf of the GNWT.

Volunteers – means all individuals engaged to provide services without remuneration on behalf of the GNWT.

Fully Vaccinated – for the purposes of this Policy, a person is considered Fully Vaccinated 14 days after receiving the final dose of a Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine or an approved combination of Health Canada authorized vaccines.

GUIDELINES

General

The CSFTNO is committed to ensuring a safe working environment for our employees and members of the public whom they serve.

All Employees, Contractors and Volunteers will be required to have received the full series of Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine or an approved combination of Health Canada approved vaccines at least 14 full days prior to November 30, 2021.

Submitting Proof of Vaccination

CSFTNO Employees, including substitute teachers, casuals and relief workers, must provide documentation setting out their proof of vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.

All newly hired Employees will be required to submit proof of vaccination documentation before their start date and time. Those who do not provide proof of full vaccination will be required to use designated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times and undergo testing per these Guidelines until they submit proof of vaccination.

Contractors and Volunteers may not be permitted to provide services if they do not provide proof of vaccination.

Acceptable Proof of Vaccination

Acceptable proof of vaccination documentation must be an official record from the public health office in the jurisdiction(s) where the Employee received the vaccine dose(s) and must include the following information:

i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
ii. The employee's full name;
iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

Employees

CSFTNO Employees will submit their proof of vaccination using the Human Resources Information System (HRIS; aka Peoplesoft). Instructions for submitting proof of vaccination through HRIS is published on the MyHR website.

CSFTNO employees who may require assistance with submitting their proof of vaccination should speak with their principal or superintendent so that arrangements can be made in advance of November 30, 2021.

The Human Resources Branch of the Department of Finance is responsible for securing personal information submitted by SSDEC Employees in accordance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPPA) and for verification of Employee vaccination information.

Upon submission of the Employee's proof of vaccination documents, the information will be verified and the Employee's direct supervisor notified that the Employee has submitted proof of vaccination.

Contractors and Volunteers

CSFTNO Contractors and Volunteers may submit their proof of vaccination to the respective principal or superintendent either in person (secure), or by email (not secure). If submitting documentation in person, call the principal or superintendent ahead to ensure that they are aware that you are coming to drop off your documentation. Be sure to provide the document(s) directly to your principal or superintendent, indicating to them whether they may keep the original document(s) or whether they will need to make a copy.

The CSFTNO is responsible for securing personal information submitted by Contractors and Volunteers in accordance with the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPPA).

The principal or superintendent will review the submitted proof of vaccination document and verify the required information. The information verified will be:

i. The issuing authority of the vaccination record;
ii. The individual's full name;
iii. The name/brand of the vaccine(s) received; and
iv. The date(s) of vaccination.

All proof of Employee vaccination documents will be securely stored in the HRIS system. All proof of Contractor and Volunteer vaccination documents will be returned to the person or deleted.

The principal or superintendent will maintain a record detailing which of their Employees, Contractors and Volunteers have submitted acceptable proof of vaccination documentation, and may include the date of the most recent vaccination dose. This record will be for the purposes of monitoring and enforcing workplace safety precautions in lieu of up-to-date vaccination.

Use of and Access to Employee Information

SSDEC Employee vaccination status information may only be accessed in circumstances deemed necessary by the GNWT and for the purposes set out in the Policy.

In the event of any unauthorized access to an Employee's vaccination status information, the Employee will be immediately advised of the breach and circumstances relating to that breach.

CSFTNO Employees may access their vaccination status information through HRIS.

Other Measures to protect the safety of employees and members of the public

Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who do not provide proof of vaccination by November 30, 2021, will be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) designated by the CSFTNO at all times in the workplace and during school sanctioned activities, and to undergo regular testing for COVID-19 as directed, until they provide proof of vaccination, or until the end of their duties during a school sponsored activity.

Any Employee, Contractor or Volunteer who refuses to wear PPE or participate in testing as required by the Guidelines will be asked to take a leave without pay until they do so.

Personal Protective Equipment

Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who have not provided proof of vaccination will be required to wear a GNWT authorized face mask while completing their duties. These employees may also be required to wear other authorized PPE, such as eye protection and gloves, depending on the employees' duties, level of contact with colleagues, students, and members of the public, and other hazard control measures in place at the worksite.

Required PPE will be provided by the employer. Employees who prefer to use their own face masks may do so providing the masks are one-time use non-medical masks or masks consisting of at least three layers of cloth. Employees who choose to use their own masks will not be reimbursed costs. Face shields, buffs, neck gaiters, scarfs, bandanas, or masks with exhaust valves are not acceptable for use under this Policy.

Providing proof of vaccination does not release employees from use of PPE or adherence to COVID-19 testing that is required in their workplace or upon direction of the Chief Public Health Officer.

COVID-19 Testing

Regular testing for COVID-19 may be required within the preceding 48 hours of attendance at a GNWT worksite for all CSFTNO Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who do not provide proof of vaccination. Those Employees will be required to provide proof of a negative test result produced within the preceding 48 hours before resuming work or attending at a GNWT worksite.

COVID-19 testing of Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who have not provided proof of vaccination will be conducted as directed:

- Upon confirmation of a negative COVID-19 Test result, the individual will be allowed to resume duties wearing the required PPE.
- In the event of a positive COVID-19 test, the individual will immediately begin self-isolating. The individual will be required to follow all Office of the Chief Public Health Officer requirements in effect at the time of the positive test and may only return to work once cleared to do so by Public Health.

The time required to complete a test will be the sole responsibility of each Employee, Contractor and Volunteer. The schedule of each Employee, Contractor and Volunteer's COVID-19 testing will be set with regard to the work schedule to ensure that there is an appropriate nexus of time between a negative test result and performing their duties. For example:

- If an Employee, Contractor or Volunteer is providing test results three times per week, testing will be spread out throughout the week depending on the employee's schedule, and early enough so as to allow the result to be attained prior to the start of the work day.
- Where an Employee, Contractor or Volunteer is scheduled for duty-travel, testing should happen close in time to departure, and may be further required every 48 hours, depending on the preference of the respective principal or superintendent.

Duty Travel by Air

The Government of Canada has instituted vaccination requirements for all travelers departing by air from Canadian airports. Duty travel by air will require CSFTNO Employees to be fully vaccinated and to provide proof of vaccination. Use of PPE and testing for COVID-19 in lieu of vaccination will not be permitted.

Duty Travel by Ground

For the duration of the Duty Travel, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who have not provided proof of vaccination shall wear CSFTNO designated PPE at all times, except at times when they are alone in their travel accommodations or dining.

All CSFTNO Employees will be assigned their own accommodations while on Duty Travel, except in exigent circumstances where it may not be possible.

CSFTNO Employees, Contractors or Volunteers who have not provided proof of vaccination are required to wear PPE throughout travel to and from Duty Travel destinations.

When Employees, Contractors or Volunteers are travelling, it is important to ensure that they bring sufficient PPE supplies for the duration of their duty travel and to accommodate their needs if their travel is extended.

Accommodations

Accommodations will be made for Employees who are both unable to be vaccinated and unable to wear mandatory PPE or undergo regular testing for medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act*. The NWT Human Rights Commission has noted in general reference to vaccination policies that a person who chooses not to get vaccinated because of a personal choice or singular belief is not protected under the NWT Human Rights Act, and does not have the right under the Act to be accommodated. (Source: https://nwthumanrights.ca/newspost/statement-on-mandatory-vaccine-policies-and-passports/)

CSFTNO Employees seeking accommodation are subject to the *Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy* and the *Duty to Accommodate Policy Application Guidelines*.

Requests for accommodation due to a medical or human rights exemption to COVID-19 vaccination must be made to the CSFTNO as soon as is practicable, so as to allow time for the accommodation consideration process.

Documentation Required for Medical Exemptions

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and Tlicho Community Services Agency released an Approach to Requests for

Exemption from COVID-19 guideline, which provides guidance to support NWT healthcare providers in a consistent and evidence-based approach to vaccine exemption requests.

CSFTNO Employees requesting an accommodation due to a medical exemption to vaccination will be required to provide a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner or other certified proof of medical exemption from a physician or nurse practitioner in order to claim medical exemption status.

EMPLOYEE, EMPLOYER, AND CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Employee, Contractor and Volunteer

- All Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to the worksite.
- Any Employee, Contractor or Volunteer, regardless of vaccination status, who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should refrain from attending at their workplace and should promptly advise their direct supervisor.
- All Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are expected to follow all Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) and Public Health orders.
- Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are responsible to maintain current COVID-19 vaccination status.
- Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are responsible for obtaining copies of their vaccination records.
- All Employees, Contractors and Volunteers must provide proof of full vaccination on or before November 30, 2021.
- CSFTNO Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who will not provide proof of vaccination by November 30, 2021 should inform their principal or superintendent at the earliest possible date so that arrangements can be made for provision of PPE and institution of a testing schedule, or so that other accommodations can be made, where applicable.
- Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are responsible for complying with all PPE and testing protocols as directed.

Responsibilities of the Employer

- The CSFTNO is responsible for informing all incumbents of positions within the CSFTNO, in writing, of the vaccination requirements they must adhere to (see draft letters in Appendices).
- The CSFTNO is responsible for ensuring that all required PPE is provided to Employees who are required to wear PPE during the provision of services.
- The CSFTNO will provide information about COVID-19 vaccination to all Employees, Contractors and Volunteers and ensure that those who wish to receive COVID-19 vaccination are granted the opportunity to do so. Materials and information about COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the GNWT's Response to COVID-19 website.

- GNWT or CSFTNO hiring managers will include details about the GNWT COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the Guidelines in all job postings.
- The CSFTNO will ensure that all CSFTNO workplaces follow GNWT Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards for COVID-19 safety within the workplace.

Responsibilities of Contractors and Volunteers

A Contractor, its employees and any subcontracted employees, including contracted District Education Authority (DEA) Secretary Treasurers, and any approved Volunteers, including Aurora College practicum students, performing work or providing services in GNWT facilities or worksites are required to:

- Be fully vaccinated, as defined in the Policy; or
- wear PPE in the workplace (face mask, eye protection, and gloves) and undergo testing, based on the requirements of the CSFTNO, for COVID-19 until they are fully vaccinated, as defined in the Policy; and
- adhere to any additional PPE requirements implemented by the facility operators/management for guests or workers entering the facility.

Contractors are responsible for ensuring their employees meet these requirements and shall bear sole responsibility for all associated costs.

The Contractor shall, upon request, provide the principal or superintendent with proof of vaccination and testing for any employees who are scheduled to perform work or provide services under the Contract in CSFTNO facilities or work sites.

In the event the Contractor or Volunteer is in default of these requirements during the performance of the work, is unable to perform the work, or is unable to provide proof of vaccination or testing as required by the principal or the superintendent, the GNWT/CSFTNO has the right at any time, in its sole discretion, without incurring any liability whatsoever, to:

- take the Work out of the hands of the Contractor or Volunteer;
- terminate the Contract; or
- consider the Contractor as ineligible (not responsible) with respect to future GNWT tender or proposal requests.

LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER RELATED AUTHORITY

The *Public Service Act* and Regulations, and all relevant policies, and the terms and conditions of employment continue to apply.

All Employees, Contractors and Volunteers will agree to abide by all government, department and CSFTNO policies, collective agreements, procedures and legislation, including but not limited to the confidentiality of clients, department information and documentation.

Any failure to comply with the GNWT Vaccination Policy and these Guidelines, including falsifying proof of vaccination status, and/or refusing to disclose or comply with applicable PPE and testing requirements, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

APPENDIX A

Policy Roll-Out: Ensuring Maximum Vaccination

Education and Training for Unvaccinated Employees

The CSFTNO encourages all Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who are able to become vaccinated. Vaccine hesitancy can be the result of individuals being unaware of the benefits of vaccination, both for the Employee and societally, and of the safety of vaccination.

CSFTNO Employees, Contractors and Volunteers who are not yet vaccinated are encouraged to review vaccine information and strongly consider the benefits of vaccination. These materials are available at the GNWT's Response to COVID-19 webpage.

CSFTNO Employees are able to attend vaccination appointments during their scheduled working hours, subject to operational requirements.

Health and Safety Considerations

Accommodations Procedures and Departmental Preparedness

The CSFTNO is prepared to review and if necessary provide accommodations for Employees who are unable to be vaccinated or undergo regular testing, either for medical reasons or based on protected grounds under the *Human Rights Act.*