

Saint Joseph's College

Policy Manual

Human Resources

Section Name: The Work Environment

Section Number: 4.16

Effective Date: September 21, 2022

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Policy

Purpose:

Vaccinations & Boosters are vital tools to reduce the presence and severity of COVID-19 cases in the workplace, in communities, and in the nation as a whole. Saint Joseph's College has adopted this policy on mandatory vaccinations to safeguard the health of our employees from the hazard of COVID-19.

SJC continues to support vaccinations and boosters and considers them to be a significant means to provide an even more safe learning, living, and working environment for the students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, this is a public health matter caused by the pandemic, and having our community vaccinated supports the Saint Joseph's College commitment to public health.

Vaccinations control the spread of the virus, specifically for those who are vaccinated. For vaccinated individuals who contract the virus, symptoms are known to be lessened and the risk of serious illness, including hospitalization or worse, are extremely rare. The vaccine is a means to a "herd" immunity, allowing the College to resume previous operations while continuing with new ways to work that have proven to be successful during the pandemic.

Eligibility:

All Faculty, Staff and Students Employees

Policy:

This Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy applies to all employees of Saint Joseph's College.

All employees covered by this policy are required to be fully vaccinated as a term and condition of employment at Saint Joseph's College. Employees are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after completing primary vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine, with, if applicable, at least the minimum recommended interval between doses. For example, this includes two weeks after a second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or two weeks after the second dose of any combination of two doses of different COVID-19 vaccines as part of one primary vaccination series. All employees are required to report their vaccination status and to provide proof of vaccination. Employees must provide truthful and accurate information about their

COVID-19 vaccination status, and, if applicable, their testing results. Employees not in compliance with this policy will be subject to discipline.

Faculty and staff who are not exempt from this vaccination requirement and who decline to be vaccinated, will not be authorized to work and will be subject to additional consequences, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees may request an exemption from this mandatory vaccination policy if the vaccine is medically contraindicated for them or medical necessity requires a delay in vaccination. Employees may also be legally entitled to a reasonable accommodation if they cannot be vaccinated because of a disability, or if the provisions in this policy for vaccination for COVID-19 conflict with a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance.

There will be two permitted exemptions to the College's COVID-19 vaccination requirement based on the following:

1. **Medical:** SJC provides reasonable accommodations, absent undue hardship, to qualified faculty and staff with disabilities that enable them to perform their job duties. In order to qualify for a medical exemption, faculty and staff must provide medical documentation from their doctor of a valid medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccination.
2. **Religious (for Faculty & Staff only):** SJC provides reasonable accommodations, absent undue hardship, to faculty and staff with sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, or practices that conflict with getting vaccinated. Pursuant to federal law, a religious exemption will be made for faculty and staff only who hold a sincere religious belief that is contrary to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Follow-up documentation may be requested from your religious leader after an interactive dialogue with Human Resources.

Requests for exemptions and reasonable accommodations must be initiated by the employee. Any employee who believes an accommodation is needed because of a disability or sincerely held religious belief (Faculty & Staff only) as noted above, are responsible for initiating the reasonable accommodation request through Human Resources by contacting Heidi Jacques in Human Resources ([hjacob@sjcme.edu](mailto:hjacques@sjcme.edu) or 207-893-7756) for an exemption. All such requests will be handled in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and the SJC Employee Policies published on our [Handbooks & Policies](#) web page.

Procedure:

In accordance with the [SJC Vaccination Plan](#), all Saint Joseph's College employees must be fully vaccinated or have a documented accommodation.

To be fully vaccinated an employee must have obtained:

- The second dose of a two-dose vaccine
or
- The one dose of a single dose vaccine

Employees will be considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the requisite number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. An employee will be considered partially vaccinated if they have received only one dose of a two-dose vaccine.

Vaccination Status and Acceptable Forms of Proof of Vaccination

All vaccinated employees are required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination, regardless of where they received vaccination. Proof of vaccination status can be submitted via the [SJC Encrypted Vaccination Verification Form](#).

Acceptable proof of vaccination status is:

1. The record of immunization from a healthcare provider or pharmacy;
2. A copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card;
3. A copy of medical records documenting the vaccination;
4. A copy of immunization records from a public health, state, or tribal immunization information system; or
5. A copy of any other official documentation that contains the type of vaccine administered, date(s) of administration, and the name of the healthcare professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine(s).

Proof of vaccination generally should include the employee's name, the type of vaccine administered, the date(s) of administration, and the name of the healthcare professional(s) or clinic site(s) that administered the vaccine. In some cases, state immunization records may not include one or more of these data fields, such as clinic site; in those circumstances Saint Joseph's College will still accept the state immunization record as acceptable proof of vaccination.

If an employee is unable to produce one of these acceptable forms of proof of vaccination, despite attempts to do so (e.g., by trying to contact the vaccine administrator or state health department), the employee can provide a signed and dated statement attesting to their vaccination status (fully vaccinated or partially vaccinated); attesting that they have lost and are otherwise unable to produce one of the other forms of acceptable proof; and including the following language:

"I declare (or certify, verify, or state) that this statement about my vaccination status is true and accurate. I understand that knowingly providing false information regarding my vaccination status on this form may subject me to criminal penalties."

An employee who attests to their vaccination status in this way should, to the best of their recollection, include in their attestation the type of vaccine administered, the date(s) of administration, and the name of the healthcare professional(s) or clinic site(s) administering the vaccine.

New Hires:

All new employees are required to comply with the vaccination requirements outlined in this policy before their first date of employment and as a condition of employment. Potential candidates for employment will be notified of the requirements of this policy prior to the start of employment.

COVID-19 Vaccination Side Effects & Adverse Reactions

No different than the H1N1 Flu vaccine, some individuals have side effects as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine and/or boosters. According to the CDC, side effects are normal signs that your body is adjusting to the vaccine and building protection.

If you experience side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccination or booster, please stay home and rest. Information on potential side effects and remedies can be found [here](#).

Time off for this reason should be entered against Maine Earned Paid Leave (MEPL) or Earned Time in ADP.

Continued & Extensive Reactions

If an employee experiences extensive adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine and/or boosters, SJC will follow all OSHA requirements and procedures. This includes supporting employees having to take one or more days from work, receive medical treatment beyond first aid, or the like as per the OSHA 29 CFR 1904.7 standard. OSHA specifically describes the issue of mandating employee vaccination, and states that any adverse reactions that an employee experiences after being required to receive the vaccine will automatically classify as work-related. As a result, SJC will need to be notified by employees of any extensive adverse reactions in order to follow proper procedures and monitor any further employee reactions to the vaccine.

Any employee who experiences an adverse reaction causing them to take one or more days from work, receive medical treatment beyond first aid, or the like as per the OSHA standard, should contact Heidi Jacques in Human Resources ([hj Jacques@sjcme.edu](mailto:hjacques@sjcme.edu) or 207-893-7756).

Employee Notification of COVID-19 and Removal from the Workplace

Saint Joseph's College requires employees to promptly notify the following via email or phone call when they have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider:

- Health & Wellness Center
- Supervisor
- Human Resources

Should an employee test positive for COVID-19, the Human Resources department will provide instructions regarding current work protocols.

Medical Removal from the Workplace and Return to Work Criteria

Saint Joseph's College has also implemented a policy for keeping COVID-19 positive employees from the workplace in certain circumstances. Saint Joseph's College will immediately remove an employee from the workplace if they have received a positive COVID-19 test or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a licensed healthcare provider (i.e., immediately send them home or to seek medical care, as appropriate).

Members of the SJC community who test positive will isolate at home for 7 days from the day of the positive test and must receive a test at the end of the isolation period. If that test is negative,

the employee may return to work. If it is positive they must continue to isolate for 3 more days (for a total of 10 days), and then return with no further tests.

If an employee has severe COVID-19 or an immune disease, Saint Joseph's College will follow the guidance of a licensed healthcare provider regarding return to work.

If an employee is identified as a close contact, that person must be tested 3-5 days following the identification and must wear a mask in all public indoor spaces until they receive a negative test.

Current Pandemic Response Team guidelines will be the mainstay for determining when an employee may return to work.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination & booster information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy.