



CORONAVIRUS VACCINE POLICY – MARCH 2021

Policy:

A vaccine to prevent serious health effects from Coronavirus has been developed and made available to the public. The purpose of this policy is to set the employer's position on the vaccine as it affects our workforce and the related rights of our employees.

Background:

Individual opinions on vaccines can vary greatly and we appreciate that having a vaccine is generally a personal choice, sometimes dictated by personal circumstances such as health or religion. The Government has not made the taking of this vaccine mandatory and therefore it remains a voluntary exercise.

Our Position:

As an employer, we have a duty to ensure the safety of our employees. In addition, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. Despite the extensive measures we have taken to provide for a COVID secure workplace, the vaccine provides a greater level of personal safety against serious illness.

Because of this, we encourage our employees to take up the opportunity to have the vaccine when it is offered to them.

We expect our employees to be treated with dignity and respect by their colleagues in relation to their decision over the vaccine.

We will not accept any bullying or harassment, or any other unwanted behaviour, against an employee because of their decision. Any employee who feels they have been treated unfavourably should report this to their Manager.

Vaccinations will not change any of our risk assessments, COVID procedures or policies at this time.

Finally, you receiving the vaccine may not be popular with our parents, suppliers, or the public at large, and therefore while we appreciate you may be happy to have been vaccinated, we should remain sensitive that other people may not have been vaccinated and do not know when they will be.

Making an informed decision:

It is normal that some of our employees may have concerns about having the vaccine. We encourage all our workforce to make an informed decision by paying attention to official information sources such as the NHS. We would ask employees to check the source of any information they read about the vaccine as we are aware there is a certain amount of uncertified information available.

Having the vaccine:

Current Government strategy for vaccinating the UK population is formulated on a priority basis according to age, industry sector and vulnerable status.

Employees may be able to book a vaccination by calling NHS 119. Normally employees will receive notification of their vaccine appointment which may be at their normal G.P. surgery or at one of the vaccination centres set up specifically for this purpose. The vaccine is available free of charge. It is currently administered in two doses, to be provided at separate appointments, 12 weeks apart.

We encourage employees to verify a notification purporting to provide vaccine appointment details if this appears suspicious due to a number of scams attempting to gain bank details.

Vaccine appointments should be treated in the same way as other medical appointments so, where possible, employees should attempt to secure an appointment outside of their normal working hours, or as close to the start or the end of the working day as possible. Due to shift patterns and covering ratios we may not be able to allow employees time to attend the appointment if it is outside of working hours and may have to ask them to reschedule it if it is not convenient for the setting. If any time is taken off work to attend the appointment this will be unpaid.

What happens if you have a reaction to the vaccine?

If you are unfit for work following the vaccine you must report your absence in the normal way following our absence reporting procedure. You will be asked to complete a Self-Certificate for the first 7 days of absence.

