

18 February 2022

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 25 January 2022 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *a copy of Oranga Tamariki's Policy on Covid-19 vaccinations for staff members and caregivers who have contact with children in their care.*

Our current position on vaccinations for caregivers and whānau is that it is not mandatory for whānau or non-kin caregivers to receive the vaccination. However, we have an important role to ensure they are supported to receive factual information regarding the vaccine from healthcare professionals and are encouraged to be vaccinated.

The link below outlines how we support kaimahi who work directly with tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau and caregivers to help them to have conversations about vaccination against COVID-19.

[Talking to tamariki, whānau or family and caregivers about the COVID-19 vaccine | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

I have also attached a copy of the Oranga Tamariki COVID-19 Vaccination Policy January 2022.

Oranga Tamariki intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter on our website. Your personal details will be deleted and we will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@ot.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz). If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. Information about this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to be 'Steve Groom', with a stylized, flowing script.

Steve Groom

**General Manager Public, Ministerial and Executive Services**



**ORANGA  
TAMARIKI**  
Ministry for Children

New Zealand Government

# Oranga Tamariki COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

January 2022

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## Oranga Tamariki COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

At Oranga Tamariki —Ministry for Children, our highest priority is the safety and welfare of our kaimahi and the tamariki, rangatahi and whānau we support. The goal of the New Zealand Government is to ensure that public sector agencies are consistent in their approach to mandatory vaccination rollout to our workforce. The final decision on vaccination rests with the individual.

### Context

Until relatively recently, New Zealand was operating under an “elimination strategy”. However, in early October 2021, the Prime Minister communicated that as we approach high levels of vaccination the New Zealand Government would be shifting to an approach based on minimisation and protection, supported by the COVID-19 Protection Framework (or Traffic Light System) which came into effect on 3 December 2021.

The Delta variant of COVID-19 has seen increasing spread of community transmission in New Zealand, and we have seen the Omicron variant is now in several countries including Australia. Community transmission means that the risk to our people and those we interact with in the course of our work, of being infected with COVID-19 has increased.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish Oranga Tamariki’s approach to COVID-19 vaccinations for roles and sites in line with the existing Public Health Order and our own Health and Safety Risk Assessment process.
- Ensure the safety of our kaimahi, the tamariki, rangatahi, whānau and caregivers we support, and others who we come into contact within the course of our work.
- Comply with all public health and social measures while continuing to provide public services.
- Oranga Tamariki is responsible for the health & safety of kaimahi and others who can be affected by our activities. These obligations are imposed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and associated Regulations to safeguard our people and operations by way of eliminating risks or if they cannot be eliminated, by minimising those risks as so far as reasonably practicable.

- This means we have a responsibility to minimise the risk of the virus spreading or infecting which includes asking all our kaimahi to be vaccinated and requiring some people to provide Covid Vaccination Certificates (CVCs or a My Vaccine Pass) at our sites and offices
- Oranga Tamariki supports vaccination as a measure to protect the health and safety of all workers, consultants, contractors, and those vulnerable people in our community.
- Oranga Tamariki acknowledges the need for broader wellbeing support for kaimahi beyond the COVID-19 risks we all currently face and know about. The variants and risks associated with COVID-19 may continue to change and the measures and controls we implement today will be modified as further measures and controls become available, such as booster shots and rapid antigen testing in the workplace. As such we will update, amend, or replace this Policy as needed. We will consult again if any significant changes become necessary.

## Approach

This policy is in addition to the requirements of the Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 (Vaccinations Order).

Our approach is that all Oranga Tamariki kaimahi (including those that are already required to be vaccinated under the Vaccinations Order) are required to be fully vaccinated. This includes all kaimahi who work for Oranga Tamariki as employees, independent contractors, on secondment, on student placement, or as a volunteer (but excluding volunteer caregivers).

In addition, to enter an Oranga Tamariki site or office, all kaimahi (excluding volunteer caregivers) and all people who wish to enter in a professional capacity<sup>[1]</sup>, will be required to present their My Vaccine Pass.

In exceptional cases we would consider an exception to the requirement to be vaccinated, but we would need to work with the individual concerned on a case-by-case basis to assess whether such an exception would be allowed and how this could be managed while still meeting our health and safety obligations.

<sup>[1]</sup> This includes people like lawyers or tradespeople but not Oranga Tamariki employees or employees of other agencies/organisations that normally work in our sites/offices

In exceptional cases we would consider an exemption to this requirement, but we would need to work with the individual concerned and Ministry of Health on a case-by-case basis.

This approach aligns with Oranga Tamariki values and is underpinned by the guiding principles of:

- We put tamariki first – we are safeguarding our vulnerable
- We believe aroha is vital – we focus on what is right, and that is protecting our people from infection.
- We respect the mana of the people – we listened and put forward a reasonable and practicable solution to minimise risk and protect our vulnerable people.
- We are tika and pono – we do what we say.
- We recognise that Oranga Tamariki is a journey – we understand the long-term impact of not vaccinating our kaimahi and the effect it will have on our services and vulnerable people.

## **Rationale**

We consider requiring all Oranga Tamariki kaimahi to be vaccinated is the best way to ensure that we can continue to work together and practice in the way we want to and meets the broader health and safety needs of our kaimahi, while protecting each other, and the tamariki, rangatahi, whānau, caregivers and communities we interact with from contracting COVID-19.

Many of the tamariki we support are currently too young to be vaccinated, and many in the Oranga Tamariki population are less likely to be fully vaccinated or are more vulnerable to adverse outcomes if they catch COVID-19 because of underlying health conditions, disability etc.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to:

- Permanent, temporary, and casual kaimahi of Oranga Tamariki.
- Individual contractors or consultants who work for Oranga Tamariki on Oranga Tamariki premises.
- Secondees from another agency or business who are on secondment to Oranga Tamariki.
- Students on a placement to Oranga Tamariki.
- Vendor services and service providers of Oranga Tamariki (and their staff) who visit our workplaces (this includes sites, offices, Oranga Tamariki owned or leased homes and residences).
- Any other external parties (for example external lawyers, police) when visiting or working from our workplaces.

## Notes

1. All new kaimahi will be required to comply with this policy effective from their start date.
2. To remain fully vaccinated means following public health advice which includes any booster vaccinations needed.
3. Volunteer caregivers are out of scope of this policy as approved by the Minister.
4. This policy sits alongside Oranga Tamariki's COVID-19 systems and processes, that have been developed in line with Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidelines.
5. We expect all those within the scope of this Policy to understand and comply with this Policy.

## Policy Implementation

For kaimahi<sup>[2]</sup> to comply with this policy kaimahi must have :

- A first dose of an official COVID-19 vaccine no later than 1 February 2022
- A second dose of an official COVID-19 vaccine no later than 7:00am, 1 March 2022
- Any required boosters or additional vaccines as recommended by the Ministry of Health and within the expected timeframes.

You will be required to provide proof of your vaccination status with My Covid Record, which is the official record of your COVID-19 vaccination status (or My Vaccine Pass as an acceptable alternative) to your manager. Your My COVID Record will need to be provided if you have only received one dose of the vaccine by 1 February 2022. For more information on My Vaccine Pass please read the official information [here](#).

For contractors (and their employees) and other external parties to comply with this policy as it relates to accessing sites, they must have a My Vaccine Pass to be able to access an Oranga Tamariki site or office from 3 December 2021.

## Related Procedures and Guidance

- [Health and Safety policies](#)
- [Oranga Tamariki Values](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
- [Unite against COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Information for Māori](#)



- [Ministry for Pacific Peoples — COVID-19 resources](#)
- [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Vaccinations\) Order 2021 \(LI 2021/94\) \(as at 20 November 2021\) Schedule 2 Groups of affected persons – New Zealand Legislation](#)

**Policy Owner:** Health, Safety and Security

Policy Sponsor: People and Leadership

Last updated: 22 December 2021

Due for review: 1 June 2022

<sup>[1]</sup> This includes people like lawyers or tradespeople but not Oranga Tamariki kaimahi or employees of other agencies/organisations that normally work in our sites/offices

<sup>[2]</sup> This includes all kaimahi of Oranga Tamariki, individual contractors/consultants, secondees and student placements