

## **POLICY AND STATEMENT OF ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF PROVINCIAL/SCHOOL DISTRICT VACCINATION MANDATES FOR TEACHERS**

Recognizing the critical public health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenge posed by the pandemic to the safe operation of schools, the importance of schools and public education\* in the lives of children, their parents and communities, and that schools are places where large numbers of students and staff congregate and disperse from, the Alberta Teachers' Association supports and encourages, for the protection of its members, other school staff, students and the general public, reasonable policies that may be mandated by the Province of Alberta and/or by individual school districts requiring members to be vaccinated against COVID-19, provided such policies are:

- Consistent with provisions in the Collective Agreement;
- Comply with Human Rights legislation such that when an individual is not able to be vaccinated on the basis of a medical condition, or other protected ground under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, the employer must accommodate the individual to the point of undue hardship;
- Do not impose disciplinary measures for non-compliance but provide non-disciplinary alternatives to vaccination (eg. ongoing submission of test results, reassignment to online teaching where possible and leave of absence without pay as a last resort);
- Temporary and include measures to ensure the policy is periodically updated and reviewed given the evolving and dynamic nature of the pandemic;
- Complimentary to, but do not replace or pre-empt, other measures (eg. masking, cohorting, reduction of class size, improvements to ventilation) to reduce transmission (including breakthrough infections) of COVID-19, particularly in populations that are not eligible to receive vaccines at this time;
- Introduced in a manner that enables and encourages compliance by persons who have not yet completed their vaccinations, and/or who may require future booster vaccination;
- Applied to all persons in the employ of the district who are routinely in contact with students, teachers or other staff.

Where vaccination mandates meet the above criteria, the Association does not anticipate providing support to members in challenging them, nor will the Association become involved in challenges to reasonable vaccine mandates initiated and pursued privately by individuals.

Members are invited to contact the Association for advice on whether a vaccine mandate meets the above criteria or if they are unable to be vaccinated on the basis of a protected ground under the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and are not being accommodated to the point of undue hardship.

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\* The term "public education" here refers to the education system comprised of the public, Catholic separate and Francophone school authorities that employ members of the Alberta Teachers' Association and that are governed by publicly elected school boards.

Furthermore, the Association calls upon the Government of Alberta and school districts to actively promote and fully facilitate vaccination of all persons in the school community, including students as they become eligible to be vaccinated.

This policy and statement reflect established policies previously passed by the Annual Representative Assembly of the Alberta Teachers' Association:

2.2.11.10 The Government of Alberta should require all K–12 students, without exception, who attend schools that receive public funds to be vaccinated. [2018]

2.2.11.11 The Government of Alberta should provide on-site, voluntary influenza vaccinations at no cost to all teachers, school staff and students. [2018]

2.2.11.12 The Government of Alberta should require all staff, except those presenting valid medical exemptions, who work in publicly funded K–12 schools and district sites that receive public funds to be vaccinated. [2019, 2020]

24.2.6.7 The Government of Alberta should require school authorities to help the Alberta Health Services Board implement vaccination programs and other mandated population health initiatives by

1. distributing information about the initiatives to students, staff, parents and the school community;
2. providing health care personnel with access to students and staff; and
3. allowing their facilities to be used for delivering the initiatives, provided that the provincial government covers all associated costs. [2009]