

COVID-19 STUDENT VACCINATION AND IMMUNIZATION PLAN

Purpose

The Palomar Community College District is committed to providing a safe and healthy campus. In furtherance of this commitment, this plan intends to mitigate the risks surrounding exposure to COVID-19 by requiring that all students who are on District premises have received the full COVID-19 vaccine.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the diseases caused, are a global pandemic and has resulted in widespread severe illness and death worldwide, in the United States, and in California. COVID-19 spreads mainly through close contact from person to person, including between people who are physically near each other. People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others.¹ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) notes that **“COVID-19 spreads very easily from person to person”** and that “[t]he virus that causes COVID-19 appears to spread more efficiently than influenza....”²

According to the CDC, vaccination is a safe and effective way to prevent people who are vaccinated from becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. The CDC recommends widespread vaccination and states:

COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting COVID-19:

- All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19.
- All COVID-19 vaccines that are in development are being carefully evaluated in clinical trials and will be authorized or approved only if they make it substantially less likely you will get COVID-19.
- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases and early data from clinical trials, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may also help keep individuals from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19.
- Through vaccination, individuals may also protect people around them, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection:

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know the impact of COVID-19 on individuals. Those with COVID-19 are more likely to spread the disease to friends, family, and others.
 - Clinical trials of all vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use, including COVID-19 vaccines. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine for use under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).
 - Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. Current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. However, experts do not know for sure how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect individuals by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.
 - Both natural immunity and immunity produced by a vaccine are important parts of COVID-19 disease that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.
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¹ Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html> [April 2, 2021].

² CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>, [April 2, 2021]

- COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic.
- Wearing masks and social distancing helps reduce the chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with the immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if exposed.
- The combination of getting vaccinated and following the CDC’s recommendations will offer the best protection from COVID-19.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce the spread of the disease in communities, the CDC will continue to update the recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.

(See more from the CDC on the benefits of vaccination at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html> [April 27, 2021].)

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) also recommends that people get vaccinated to slow the spread of COVID-19. The CDPH has its own “Scientific Safety Review Workgroup,” which has confirmed that “vaccines have met high standards for safety and efficacy.”³

Based on the ease of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 and the safety and effectiveness of vaccination, this Plan operates to protect employees, students, and the community.

Plan

I. Scope of Coverage

Once this Plan is implemented, the College will require all students who will be physically present on campus for an extended time (longer than 15 minutes indoors) to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 unless the student meets one of the exemptions outlined below. Instead of being vaccinated, students may choose to take all of their courses and receive services from the College remotely, as virtual options will remain available to the extent practicable. “Fully vaccinated” means the College has documentation showing that the person received, at least 14 days prior, either the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine. The College will also require booster shots, if booster shots are recommended by the appropriate government agency such as the CDC or FDA.

Students will have six (6) weeks from the effective date of this Plan to become fully vaccinated as defined above. Vaccines must have the following approval to be accepted under this Plan:

- Full FDA approval; or
- FDA Emergency Authorization Use (EAU) approval; or
- Full World Health Organization (WHO) approval; or
- WHO Emergency Use (EU) approval

Under certain extenuating circumstances, unvaccinated students may be required to participate in routine Antigen testing in order to participate in face-to-face courses or access in-person services on District premises.

II. Effective Dates

This Plan shall be effective immediately upon full FDA approval of a COVID-19 vaccination and shall remain in effect

until the College determines that the Plan is no longer necessary. This Plan may be amended or revoked at any time.

III. Proof of Vaccination

Once fully vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine, students must submit to the College proof of vaccination and an Authorization for Disclosure and use of Medical Information to be physically present on campus. Students should submit their proof of vaccination and Authorization for Disclosure and use of Medical Information via their My Palomar portal for review by the College. All students are required to continue to abide by all College policies, procedures, and protocols regarding COVID-19 until the College directs otherwise. The District's COVID-19 Recovery Plan is available [\[INSERT LINK HERE – Currently being updated\]](#).

IV. Health or Medical Records

The College will not request any health or medical information for the purpose of enforcement of this Plan other than proof of vaccination, medical exemption, or what is required under the accommodation process. Unless consent is given, the College will not receive any medical information from students or give any medical information to any vaccination provider. Any proof of vaccination a student provides to the College will be stored in a manner consistent with applicable law and in accordance with the College's practice for storing confidential information for students.

V. Exemptions from Vaccination Requirement

Students may be exempt from the mandatory COVID-19 vaccine requirements in this Plan only under the following circumstances

- A. **Medical Exemption:** The student submits a written statement from a licensed medical provider exempting the student due to their qualifying disability or serious medical condition. This statement must be submitted on the healthcare provider's office letterhead with the healthcare provider's printed name, license number, signature, and date the statement is issued, or the medical exemption form attached herein. Students should submit the statement via their My Palomar portal for review and approval by the College.
- B. **Religious Exemption:** The student objects based on a sincerely held religious belief. If the student objects on this basis, the student must complete and submit the corresponding Religious Exemption Request Form for COVID-19 Vaccination via their My Palomar portal for review and approval by the College.

Approval of an exemption means the student may access campus without being fully vaccinated. All other COVID-19 safety protocols must be followed. These include:

- stay home if you are ill; leave campus if you start to feel ill.
- self-screen for health symptoms using the My Palomar app.
- wear [a mask that covers your nose and mouth](#) to help protect yourself and others.
- Respect the requests of others to stay up to 6 feet away.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- [Wash your hands often](#) with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- report any illness to your instructor, and complete and submit the COVID-19 questionnaire available at <https://www2.palomar.edu/pages/covid19/covid-19-questionnaire/>.

³ CDPH, https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPHa%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/COVID_VACCINE_FACT_SHEET-

ENG-08.pdf, [April 2, 2021.