



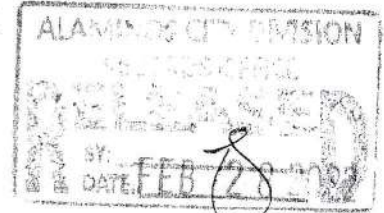
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Republika ng Pilipinas

Kagawaran ng Edukasyon

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim



AIDE MEMOIRE

16 February 2022

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROTOCOLS FOR ON-SITE REPORTING OF TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The DepEd Task Force COVID-19 (DTFC), through its vaccination program representatives, issues this aide memoire to address the various concerns raised by DepEd employees regarding the implementation of the policy requiring personnel who will physically report for work to either (1) be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or (2) undergo COVID-19 tests regularly *at their own expense*.

A. Policy Bases

1. Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) Resolution No. 148-B requires eligible personnel who are employed in **areas where there are sufficient supplies of COVID-19 vaccines and are tasked to do on-site work** to either be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or regularly undergo RT-PCR tests (or antigen tests when RT-PCR capacity is insufficient or not immediately available) **at their own expense**.
2. Based on IATF Resolution No. 149, the regular tests of those whose **second dose is not yet due pursuant to the interval prescribed for the brand of vaccine received as first dose** need not be charged at their own expense. Further, the frequency of the tests shall be **at least once every two weeks**.
3. On 10 February 2022, the National Vaccines Operation Center (NVOC) issued **NVOC Advisory No. 134** titled *Guidance on the Implementation of IATF Resolution No. 148-B series of 2021*, which defines "sufficient supply at the Local Government Unit (LGU) level... as having more than five (5) days to last inventory of COVID-19 vaccines as captured in the Vaccine Operations Reporting System (VORS)."
4. The Office of the President has approved the requirement for teachers, with non-teaching personnel, handling face-to-face classes and performing in-school functions/tasks to be vaccinated.¹

¹ <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2022/01/20/on-requiring-vaccination-for-teachers->



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION I
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF ALAMINOS CITY

Office of the Schools Division Superintendent

February 24, 2022

DIVISION MEMORANDUM
DM-2022-060

To : Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
CID Chief
SGOD Chief
Heads of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

Office of the Undersecretary for
*Administrative Service (AS), Information and C
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Ser
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5. On 02 February 2022, the Office of the Secretary issued **Office Order No. OO-OSec-2022-003** titled *Interim Guidelines on the Expansion of Limited Face-to-Face Classes*, which provides that “only vaccinated teachers may participate, and vaccinated learners shall be preferred” in the continued “implementation of limited face-to-face classes of the original pilot schools, and the commencement of the progressive expansion phase for both public and private schools.”
6. Some regional Vaccine Operations Centers (VOCs) have issued resolutions enjoining local government units (LGUs) under their respective jurisdictions to pass ordinances imposing the IATF requirement for workplaces in their cities or municipalities. Several LGUs have already passed such an ordinance. In some cases, LGU ordinances may have provisions that are unique to their respective jurisdictions and are not necessarily provided for by national issuances.²
7. DTFC has issued the following memoranda to provide guidance on how the implementation of the IATF requirement shall be contextualized in DepEd:
 - a. **DTFC Memorandum No. 575** titled *IATF Vaccination Requirement for Personnel Reporting On-Site Beginning 01 December 2021*
 - b. **DTFC Memorandum No. 586** titled *Clarifications on DTFC Memo No. 575 Titled IATF Vaccination Requirement for Personnel Reporting On-Site Beginning 01 December 2021 (Annex A)*
 - c. **DTFC Memorandum No. 609** titled *Important Updates Regarding the COVID-19 Vaccination/Negative COVID-19 Test Result Requirement for Onsite Personnel: NVOC Advisory No. 134 And LGU Ordinances (Annex B)*

B. Reiterations

1. The full vaccination/negative test result requirement for those required to report on-site does not and is not intended to unjustly discriminate against any DepEd personnel who chooses not to be vaccinated. DepEd personnel who are not vaccinated are treated fairly as they remain obliged to render work and receive compensation. No personnel who are not fully vaccinated may be terminated on the sole ground of being unvaccinated, consistent with the IATF Resolutions as well as Civil Service rules and regulations.³
2. When and where already implemented—either because the area has already been determined by NVOC to have sufficient supplies of COVID-19 vaccines or because the LGU covering the DepEd office or school has already passed an ordinance imposing the same requirement—the requirement for COVID-19 testing shall apply to personnel who are **not fully vaccinated** and are required to: (a) report on-site, (b) travel on official business, or (c) attend a work-related face-to-face gathering (e.g., seminar, training, monitoring, workshop, forum, meeting).⁴

² e.g., the ordinance of Pasig City exempts “unvaccinated individuals who can present a certificate of membership of a religious sector that does not allow any vaccination” from those who will be required to either be fully vaccinated or present a negative COVID-19 test result (paid at their own expense) when reporting for on-site work

³ <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2022/01/20/on-requiring-vaccination-for-teachers-handling-face-to-face-classes/>

⁴ Depending on the COVID-19 situation, some offices may require specific personnel to undergo regular COVID-19 testing even when they are already fully vaccinated; e.g., the case of the CO during the Omicron surge per DTFC Memorandum No. 588; or the regular testing of frontline health workers per DTFC Memorandum No. 607



DepEd recognizes that the purpose of requiring personnel who are not fully vaccinated to regularly undergo COVID-19 tests when reporting on-site is to curb the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, in order to protect the health of all other people they may come into contact with. Attached are supporting reasons why the same is not required of personnel who are already fully vaccinated (**Annex C**).

4. In DepEd, as approved by the Secretary per DTFC Memorandum No. 575, the test shall be undertaken **at most 48 hours before reporting on-site** (i.e., 48 hours before the first day that the requirement will already be implemented in the office/school, or 48 hours before the day that the personnel will return to on-site work from work-from-home arrangement).

The result shall be valid for up to two weeks from the day of testing, unless personnel develop COVID-19 symptoms or are tagged as close contacts. When either of this happens, they shall stop reporting on-site, but report immediately to the health authorities including their respective BHERTs and their attending physician, if applicable, for the necessary next steps of action.

Personnel shall be subject to another test once the validity of their result expires.

5. As a general rule, the cost of the RT-PCR or antigen test of personnel who are not fully vaccinated and have refused to be vaccinated despite being eligible for (full) vaccination shall be **charged at the personnel's own expense**.
6. If the **personnel have acceptable reasons for not (yet) being fully vaccinated**, they shall still be required to undergo regular RT-PCR/antigen tests, but these shall **no longer be at their own expense**. Instead, their tests shall be facilitated or covered by their respective offices or schools.⁵
7. In DepEd, these acceptable reasons shall include the following:
 - a. medical reasons (as validated by a DepEd medical officer)⁶;
 - b. the personnel's second dose is not yet due pursuant to the interval prescribed for the brand of vaccine they received as first dose (based on IATF Resolution No. 149); and
 - c. any other reason that may be covered by a local government ordinance (e.g., religious exemption such as in the case of Pasig City).
8. In consideration of personnel who are not fully vaccinated for other reasons not included above and therefore will be required to shoulder the costs of their tests in case they are required to report to work⁷, as well as for some offices that may not have the capacity to facilitate/cover the expenses for the testing of personnel who are not fully vaccinated but have acceptable reasons, the existing on-site work capacity requirements based on the Alert Levels may be taken advantage of so that the said personnel may be placed under applicable work arrangements (e.g., work-from-home) while they are waiting to be fully vaccinated.

⁵ IATF Resolution No. 149 does not say that "all partially vaccinated employees in the public and private sector tasked to do on-site work need not undergo regular RT-PCR test" per se, but that they need not undergo it "at their own expense, as long as their second dose is not yet due pursuant to the interval prescribed for the brand of vaccine received as first dose" (emphasis added). Following this, DepEd personnel who have acceptable reasons for not (yet) being fully vaccinated will still be required to present a negative RT-PCR/antigen result but the testing shall not be at their own expense.

⁶ Personnel who have valid medical reasons for not being (fully) vaccinated shall present a medical certificate from their attending physician, for validation by the nearest DepEd medical officer. The DepEd medical officer shall monitor the personnel's condition and request the regular updating of their medical certificate, as may be applicable, and ensure that the personnel will be (fully) vaccinated when already eligible or cleared. (DTFC Memorandum No. 575)

⁷ It is clarified that all unvaccinated DepEd personnel are not exempt from on-site work, since they may be required to report on-site under Paragraph 3(d) of DepEd Task Force Memorandum No. 575. Paragraph 3(b) of DepEd Task Force Memorandum No. 575 should be read in conjunction with Paragraph 3(d).



For example, government agencies in areas under Alert Level 2 are allowed to place up to 20% of its workforce under work-from-home arrangement.⁸ In these circumstances, personnel who are not yet fully vaccinated *may be* placed under such arrangement and not be required to report on-site. However, they shall continue to be encouraged to be fully vaccinated, when already eligible, especially in anticipation that LGUs will soon be placed under Alert Level 1 when full on-site capacity will already be required for all government agencies.

9. Per DTFC Memorandum No. 575, the same full vaccination/negative test result requirement shall be imposed on (a) guests who need to join work-related face-to-face gatherings and (b) visitors who need to enter office premises for necessary transactions.

Through DTFC Memorandum No. 586, the DTFC has clarified that its recommendation to impose the same full vaccination/negative test result requirement to “visitors who need to enter office premises for necessary transactions” is in the context of the said visitors sharing the same workspace as fully vaccinated personnel. For consistency, if only personnel who are fully vaccinated or who present a negative RT-PCR/antigen result are allowed to report on-site, the same shall be expected of guests who will share the same workspace or have close contact with the on-site personnel.

Such requirement, however, is not *necessarily* expected of guests and visitors who may need to enter work premises but will not have close contact or share the same space with fully-vaccinated personnel reporting on-site, such as the case of parents and other community members entering schools to pick up modules. It is reiterated, however, that the required health standards, such as mandatory wearing of masks at all times, observing physical distancing, and preventing crowding/congregating, shall be strictly observed.

For these instances, the Head of Functional Office or the team designated for COVID-19 response in the office is given the authority to impose such requirement, as deemed necessary. For example, the Central Office (CO) Task Force COVID-19 has long made this a requirement for guests entering CO premises, even before the IATF issued a similar requirement.

10. While the best prevention against COVID-19 is still the strict implementation of the required health standards, including universal masking, frequent sanitization, and isolation of those with symptoms and those positive, COVID-19 vaccines provide additional protection from severe COVID-19 and deaths. Vaccines approved by the FDA are safe and effective, and they protect against severe COVID-19 and death from COVID-19. Attached is a more detailed explanation on the safety of COVID-19 Vaccines (**Annex D**).

C. Requested Actions

1. The **Office of the Undersecretary for Legal Affairs** is requested to lead in providing guidance on legal matters and queries that arise from the implementation of this requirement. Legal Officers may be oriented with the appropriate message as needed so that the concerns of the field can be addressed with harmony and consistency. If necessary, DepEd, through the **Office of the Secretary**, may also need to raise some of these concerns to the IATF as they question the legality of the IATF requirement. As far as DepEd is concerned, the agency is expected and shall continue to implement national issuances.

⁸ Based on the latest Guidelines on the Implementation of Alert Levels System For Covid-19 Response, <https://iatf.don.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/20211214-IATF-GUIDELINES-RRD.pdf>



Supporting Reasons for Requiring Only Unvaccinated Individuals to Undergo Regular COVID-19 Tests

Vaccinated vs. Unvaccinated: What Are the Risks? (Excerpts)*

When someone who is unvaccinated is exposed to the COVID virus, protection from the virus comes from the body's innate immune system or "innate defenders," which are responsible for rapid, non-specific response to pathogens and harmful substances. COVID is an evasive virus, however, and can wreak havoc on the body before it can mount an adequate response.

The adaptive immune system is responsible for antigen-specific immune responses, but its initial response to an antigen can be slow. An unvaccinated person's immune system might eventually produce a stronger response to the virus, but that process could take weeks. By then the virus may have caused a lot of harm and resulted in serious illness, long-term damage, or death.

In contrast, when someone who has been vaccinated is exposed to the COVID virus, the response is notably different. The COVID vaccines create a memory immune response so that if you are exposed to the virus, your body has a way to mount a powerful defense.

If this immune response does not wipe out the virus immediately and there is a breakthrough, a vaccinated person can still expect a fuller response compared to someone who is not vaccinated. A breakthrough does not erase the protection that has already been built. This is why people who have been vaccinated but still get infected tend to have symptoms that are milder, or no symptoms at all, and recover much quicker.

Vaccine reduces transmission in breakthrough cases (Excerpts)**

People who are vaccinated for SARS-CoV-2 but get breakthrough infections may be less likely to spread the virus because they shed it for a shorter period than unvaccinated people who are infected, according a new study led by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The researchers also determined that the Delta variant's infectiousness is likely not due to high virus production in people who are infected, because it appears that virus production is similar across different SARS-CoV-2 variants.



*https://www.scripps.org/news_items/7263-vaccinated-vs-unvaccinated-what-are-the-risks

** <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/12/vaccinated-who-get-breakthrough-infections-less-contagious/>; Although this study provides some of the first direct data for virus production across variants and vaccination status, the authors caution that it was conducted in predominantly young, male, and healthy participants, and is therefore not representative of the general population. Further research in other populations is needed.

2. The **Office of the Undersecretary in Charge of Human Resource Organizational Development** is requested to lead in providing guidance to offices and schools in handling the attendance records of personnel (e.g., marking as absent, charging to existing leave credits) who may not be able to report on-site due to failure to comply with the full vaccination/negative test result requirement.⁹
3. **All DepEd personnel** are enjoined to get their complete vaccination including the booster dose, when already eligible, for their protection. Concerned **school health personnel** shall continue existing efforts to ensure that the personnel and learners who wish to avail of the vaccine have access to the nearest vaccination sites.
4. **All personnel**, especially the concerned **school health personnel** (COVID-19 Response/Vaccination Focals, Vacc2School Champions) and **Information Officers**, are enjoined to continue to initiate and support demand generation and information dissemination activities to provide accurate information/education on vaccination especially to those who still have vaccine hesitancy and misconceptions, and to encourage more DepEd's stakeholders to get vaccinated.¹⁰

Given the evolving guidance from national authorities regarding this matter, all are advised to closely follow and pay attention to any new national issuances that may provide relevant updates and changes to this memorandum, and or the cited DTFC memoranda. As repeatedly emphasized in DTFC issuances, these updates and changes brought about by issuances from the IATF, the NVOC, or the DOH shall automatically be honored.

For queries regarding this concern, please contact the **DTFC Secretariat**, BLSS-SHD, at (+632) 8632-9935 and email at medical.nursing@deped.gov.ph.

For information and guidance.

ALAIN DEL B. PASCUA
Undersecretary



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⁹ The same request has been raised to the Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development through DTFC Memorandum No. 575.
¹⁰ These may include participating in and promoting DOH's webinars, and developing/creating information materials based on these webinars, sharing DOH's infographics, as well as hosting their own information drives to reach out to as many parents and community members as possible.

Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), billions of people have already been safely vaccinated against COVID-19. All of the approved COVID-19 vaccines have been carefully tested and continue to be monitored.*

Like all vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines go through a rigorous, multi-stage testing process, including large clinical trials that involve tens of thousands of people. These trials are specifically designed to identify any safety concerns.*

An external panel of experts convened by WHO analyzes the results from clinical trials and recommends whether and how the vaccines should be used. Officials in individual countries decide whether to approve the vaccines for national use and develop policies for how to use the vaccines based on WHO recommendations.*

Currently, the Food and Drug Administration of the Philippines (FDA) has already authorized the use of the COVID-19 vaccines being administered in the country, thereby ensuring their safety.**



*<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/safety-of-covid-19-vaccines>

**<https://www.fda.gov.ph/list-of-fda-issued-emergency-use-authorization>