

Rocketship Public Schools DC
COVID-19 Vaccination Policy
September 1, 2021

In response to the FDA's full authorization of the COVID-19 vaccine and updated policies from local education and health agencies, Rocketship Public Schools DC will be requiring all employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 29, 2021. We decided to create this new policy for several reasons:

- The data clearly shows that people who are unvaccinated are significantly more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 and are significantly more likely to spread COVID-19 to others.
- Children under 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccine. By getting vaccinated, we can protect the health and safety of our students.
- The highly contagious Delta variant of COVID-19 is driving a sharp increase in infections and hospitalizations, including those among children.
- During the first two weeks of school this year, over 29 staff members have needed to quarantine. This has put a large burden on other staff who remain on-campus and must cover the gaps.
- Our schools must stay open. School closures pose a serious long-term risk to our students' social-emotional development and academic growth. We must prioritize the needs of the whole child by keeping our schools open and safe.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has formally approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. This decision replaces the emergency use authorization granted by the FDA in December 2020.

This policy is an essential component of Rocketship DC's overall strategy and commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy is designed for use together with, and not as a substitute for, other measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace.

This policy will remain in effect until further notice. Rocketship DC is monitoring guidance from all applicable public health authorities and may modify this policy as it deems necessary or appropriate.

Applicability

This policy applies to all Rocketship DC full- and part-time employees, including school staff, regional staff, and national staff based in the DC region.

Employees hired after September 20, 2021 will be able to start working with at least one dose of the vaccine, as long as the second dose (where applicable) is scheduled within a month of the person's start date. Failure to obtain the second dose (if applicable) and/or failure to submit proof of completion of a COVID-19 vaccine series within 7 days of start date will warrant disciplinary action, up to and including termination. New employees will also have the opportunity to request an exemption from this vaccination requirement due to a medical concern/disability or a sincerely-held religious belief

Vaccination Requirement

To prevent the exposure and transmission of COVID-19 in our schools and the wider community, all current and future Rocketship DC employees will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 unless approved for a medical or religious exemption. A person is considered "fully vaccinated" two weeks after their last dose in a COVID-19 vaccine series (e.g., after one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or after the second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine).

To meet this requirement by the communicated deadline(s), employees must provide the following sufficient documentation of compliance:

- I. In the case of employee who is fully vaccinated, one of the following:
 - A. A copy of your CDC vaccination card;
 - B. official documentation issued by a state vaccine registry;
 - C. an official medical record;
- II. In the case of an employee who has received an RPS-approved exemption:
 - A. An HR-approved and dated Vaccine Exemption Request Form

If a staff member does not provide proof of vaccination demonstrating completion of a COVID-19 vaccine series on or before October 15, 2021 and has not received a Rocketship approved exemption from vaccination (or been notified their request is under consideration by that date), that staff member will be considered to have voluntarily resigned and will be terminated with a final date of employment of October 29, 2021.

Exemptions and Accommodations

Rocketship DC will consider requests to be excused from this policy whenever necessary to comply with legal requirements. Employees who require an exemption from this policy due to a medical concern/disability or a sincerely-held religious belief must submit a request for exemption to HR to begin the interactive process as soon as possible, and no later than September 17, 2021.

Rocketship DC will request additional information or documentation it deems necessary to inform its decision on an employee's exemption/accommodation request. Exemptions and/or other accommodations will only be granted where they do not cause Rocketship DC undue hardship or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the employee or others in the workplace.

Employees who are ultimately granted an exemption will be required to be tested for COVID-19 twice per week (and show proof of negative test results) and must still be able to safely perform the essential functions of their job including all on campus duties. If an unvaccinated employee poses a significant risk of substantial harm to employees or others in the workplace, Rocketship DC will evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis and determine if there is any alternative reasonable accommodation (such as a leave of absence from work or reassignment) that could be provided.

Rocketship DC prohibits retaliation against any individual who seeks an exemption or accommodation under this policy. Any individual found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Deadline

The final deadline for being fully vaccinated is **October 29, 2021**. This date gives enough time for you to provide documentation if you choose to seek an exemption and to get vaccinated should your request be denied.

Recommended vaccination timeline

1st dose: by September 10, 2021

2nd dose: by October 8, 2021

Documentation submission deadline: October 15, 2021

Important Dates

Date	Action	Who
9/1	All DC staff receive COVID-19 Vaccination Policy , including Request for Exemption All DC staff who have not yet submitted vaccine documentation will receive an Intent to Vaccinate survey	HRBP
9/7	Intent to vaccinate survey response due	Staff who have not submitted proof of vaccination
9/17	Vaccine exemption request due	Staff requesting exemption
9/24	Decisions confirmed about vaccine exemption and communicated to those staff members	HR and DC leadership
10/15	Vaccination documentation due (2nd dose)	All staff
10/29	Final date of employment if not vaccinated	---

Vaccine Documentation Incentive

You can still receive the \$50 Amazon gift card incentive for providing documentation for the vaccine. After you receive both doses, upload proof of vaccination using [this form](#).

Onsite Vaccination Opportunities Available

Rocketship DC will provide both onsite access to the vaccines as well as a list of offsite vaccination sites. For offsite vaccinations, employees are to work with their manager or school leader for any time-off needed if necessary and may access their COVID-19 Leave or PTO as needed for recovering from any associated side effects. If an employee chooses to receive the vaccine off-campus and incurs any charges in doing so, that employee should submit receipts through Concur for reimbursement.

COVID-19 Leave

You can take time off to get the vaccine if you choose to get it offsite, and [COVID-19 leave](#) can be used if you are unable to work due to recovering from the side effects of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Safety Protocols after Vaccination

Unless notified in writing by Rocketship DC, employees must continue to comply with all Rocketship DC applicable COVID-19 safety protocols after they are vaccinated, which may include but not be limited to mask wearing and hand washing.

Questions

If you have questions about this policy please submit your questions to the [HR Ticketing System](#) or contact Nikki Perry, Senior HRBP, who supports the DC Region at nperry@rsed.org.