

## **Purpose of this policy**

Riding for the Disabled Association of Tasmania (RDA) believes that the provision of a safe operating environment for everyone is an integral and essential part of its responsibilities. RDA has a duty of care to our staff, volunteers, clients and visitors and encourages everyone in the workplace to take personal responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy environment. This policy provides guidance to all stakeholders entering RDA Centres, sites or being involved in operational activities, including off-site meetings (herein referred to as 'sites') with regard to COVID-19 vaccinations.

The Tasmanian Government has made a Public Health direction, mandatory vaccination of certain Workers, which requires that on and after 31 October 2021, a person is not permitted to enter, or remain on, the premises of a medical or health facility for employment, engagement (including volunteering), placement, or work experience, unless they are sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated against COVID-19. (<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/>)

As a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider, RDA Tasmania has been directed by Public Health, that certain disability support workers, including all RDA volunteers working in the RDA program, are required to be sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated against COVID-19 from 21 November 2021. NDIS requires registered providers to assure a safe environment for NDIS participants.

## **Application**

RDA stakeholders include people who are vulnerable and may be immunocompromised due to other health related concerns. Therefore, RDA requires all eligible<sup>2)</sup> persons entering RDA sites to be sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves, our volunteers, our clients (some of whom are particularly vulnerable if they contract the virus) and the general Tasmanian community.

The RDA Centre Committee of Management or RDA Tasmania must request evidence of vaccination of anyone visiting the site and record their full name and vaccination status in the vaccination register. This information should only be used or disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis. The RDA Centre must take reasonable steps to keep this information secure.

RDA Tasmania will collect and store COVID-19 vaccination status information and evidence as per RDA privacy statement, of all registered RDA Volunteers as part of their Annual Volunteer Registration.

## **Responsibilities**

RDA Tasmania and Centre Committees must:

- a) Ensure the policy is implemented in their area of control.
- b) Respect the privacy of our stakeholders in line with the RDA Privacy Statement, and not disclose their vaccination status.
- c) Encourage all stakeholders to be sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated against COVID-19.
- d) Seek assurance from all external persons accessing RDA facilities and/or events/activities, that they are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Additionally, RDA Tasmania and Centre Committees will ensure that:

- a) All necessary sanitisation requirements are undertaken on a consistent basis.
- b) All stakeholders wear an appropriate face mask when and where required or directed by either the Government and/or RDA personnel. This may include whilst outdoors undertaking riding sessions (understanding that some riders may not be able to wear an appropriate facemask).
- c) All stakeholders have a clear understanding that they should not attend an RDA venue or event if feeling unwell, and they should not return until clearance via Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or Rapid Antigen (RA) Test in line with State Government guidelines.

Riders, visitors, volunteers, support workers, parents:

- a) Are to take reasonable care for the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others, including visitors, and take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- b) Must provide their Centre with satisfactory evidence of being sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated against COVID-19, as determined by the Australian Federal Government and/or the Tasmanian State Government.
- c) Must not enter the site unless sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated, carry an official medical exemption or have been granted discretionary permission, in writing, by the RDA Centre Committee or RDA Tasmania Board.
- d) Should not attend an RDA venue or event if feeling unwell.
- e) Inform the relevant person(s) at RDA if COVID positive, which can be a Coach, Centre Committee Member or the RDA State Office.
- f) Should not return to an RDA venue or event until clearance via PCR or RA Test in line with State Government guidelines.

## **Procedure**

Where a stakeholder refuses to show proof of vaccination or be vaccinated, after receiving a clear and repeated, reasonable direction, RDA Tasmania or the RDA Centre should, in the first instance, ask the person to explain their reasons for refusing to show proof of vaccination or their reasons for not being vaccinated.

If the reasons are legitimate (such as due to an existing medical condition or they have been granted discretionary permission in writing from the RDA Centre Committee or RDA Tasmania Board) then the RDA Centre and the stakeholder should consider whether there are any options available instead of vaccination (e.g., duties which do not involve proximity to other participants and the requirement to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that includes at a minimum an appropriate mask at all times while participating in RDA activities).

If such an option is not available, the RDA Centre can refuse to allow the stakeholder to have involvement in RDA activities, as long as it is reasonably necessary to achieve the legitimate purpose of protecting the health and safety of any person or the public generally and in all of the circumstances it is reasonably justified, proportionate, and the least restrictive means available.

RDA Centres should otherwise continue to abide by their COVID-19 plan and follow any and all directions of the Tasmanian and Federal Governments.

Where disputes arise with stakeholders, they should be dealt with in accordance with the RDA Complaints Management and Resolutions Policy and Procedure.

## Exemption

An exemption will only be allowable if:

- A person is not eligible to be vaccinated due to their age, as determined by the Australian Federal Government and/or the Tasmanian State Government.
- A person has provided RDA Tasmania or the RDA Centre with the official (Tasmanian) Government COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Contraindication Form signed by a medical practitioner certifying that an exemption applies to them.
- A person has been granted discretionary permission in writing by the RDA Centre Committee or RDA Tasmania Board.

## Discretionary circumstances

In certain circumstance, the RDA Centre Committee or RDA Tasmania Board can make a discretionary decision to allow an unvaccinated rider and/or their support person permission to continue receiving support. Each applicant will be assessed based on risk on an individual basis, which includes risk to themselves, their Coach, RDA volunteer(s) who support the rider and/or other participants and volunteers in the program (see appendix 1).

Any unvaccinated person seeking a discretionary decision is required to write to the RDA Tasmania Board or Centre Committee, including the reason(s) of not being sufficiently vaccinated. The Board or Committee will then resolve and vote in a meeting or through an out-of-session (electronic) resolution if required, if the person can keep accessing RDA services and what measures will be put in place.

The outcome of this decision will be put in writing to the applicant within 48 hours of the decision being made.

The following points and/or measures will be considered for this decision, and will include, but not limited to:

- Unvaccinated high support riders may only continue if there are sufficient volunteers willing and able to support them during sessions, including an assessment of risk to the volunteer(s).
- Any unvaccinated rider and/or unvaccinated parent/support person, **must** complete a RA Test on the morning of attending RDA (noting that under revised NDIS regulations, this testing can be claimed from NDIS core budget);
- Unvaccinated riders **must** wear a face mask at all times whilst at RDA (understanding that upon completion of a rider risk assessment, it may not be possible/suitable for a rider to wear a mask);
- Unvaccinated parent(s)/support person(s) **must** wear a face mask at all times whilst at RDA and are to remain in the designated area (as decided on by RDA personnel), sufficiently away from the main areas at the RDA venue or event. This may be the carpark or another, similar area.
- There can only be one (1) unvaccinated parent/support person with a rider at any time.

## Engaging in activities before clearance received

All members and visitors twelve (12) years old and above, must be sufficiently vaccinated by the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2022. This excludes volunteers working in the program, as they are classed as disability support workers and have been mandated by the Government to be sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated since the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2021.

All members and visitors under the age of twelve (12) must be sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2022.

No stakeholder or visitor will be allowed to enter an RDA site or undertake RDA activities, unless exempt, after the stated dates above.

## Definitions

**Sufficiently<sup>1)</sup> vaccinated** as determined by the Australian Federal Government and/or the Tasmanian State Government for disability support workers.  
(<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/>)

**Eligible<sup>2)</sup> to be vaccinated** as determined by the Australian Federal Government and/or the Tasmanian State Government, unless exempt (as described in this document).

## Connected Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

All policies and procedures are available on request or <https://www.rdatas.org.au/policies-and-procedures>

### **Linked documents:**

- Volunteer Registration Form
- Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Management and Resolution Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Statement

**Authorised by:** RDA Tasmania Board

**Sign off:** Approved by RDA Tasmania Centre Delegates electronically on 04/02/2022

Ratified by RDA Tasmania Board in meeting 21/02/2022

Ratified by RDA Tasmania Centre Delegates in meeting 05/03/22

**Review date:** December 2022

## Appendix 1

### Risk Assessment Checklist

The list below has been developed for RDA Centre Committees and the RDA Tasmania Board to assist and ensure fair and reasonable decision making in regards to volunteer and other stakeholder(s)' interaction with unvaccinated clients/riders:

- a) Is the rider able to/capable of wearing a mask?
- b) Does the rider need high support during sessions?
- c) Is there a risk to the Coach and volunteer(s) who work with this rider?  
For example: are there any underlying conditions like being immunocompromised?
- d) Are there additional controls that can be put in place to protect volunteers? For example: substituting volunteers to another role, changing practices/organisation to reduce exposure, use of other tools and equipment, provision of additional PPE (including goggles or face shields)?