**Covid Protection Framework - FAQ’s**

The below questions have been raised by clubs in response to the change to the Covid Protection Framework. This document is a “live” document which will be updated from time to time as our environment continues to change in response to Covid. If you have questions that have not been answered below, please send an email to sport@specialolympics.org.nz and we will update this document and reply to you directly.

Updated on 10 Feb 2022, changes highlighted in yellow

**VENUES**

* What are the requirements for the venue at which we hold our training / events - do they have to be operating with vaccine certificates? You will need to speak to your venues about what their requirements are and when they will be implemented from. We are happy to discuss further once you are aware of what your venue requirements are if you want assistance to clarify next steps.
* Can you clarify “1 April 2022 or earlier” vaccination deadline? All events will require all participants i.e. athletes, volunteers, coaches, officials to be vaccinated regardless of when the event takes place. For everyone else that is attending training only (no events) they have until 1 April to be fully vaccinated.
* How do you keep 1m space and still participate in sport? The 1m distance rule is used to calculate the number of people that can be included in a venue e.g. if a venue is 100sqm you can have 100 people in the venue, it is not expected that people will stay 1m apart when they are participating in sport. The venue will be determining how many people are able to be active in the venue.
* What if people who are not vaccinated turn up to training or events anyway? From 1 April 2022 all athletes, volunteers and coaches will be required to be vaccinated to participate in Special Olympics activities. We would request that you ask people that are not vaccinated to not participate but see if you can support them to be vaccinated. Much the same as you would for athletes that do not have a current medical, they are not able to participate. Anyone that registers for an event will also require a medical or they will not be admitted into the event entries.
* Our Council has yet to provide any advice.

We are in contact with Councils, RSTs, Sport NZ and other related providers and they are all moving at a different pace. All you can do in this instance is keep in contact with your venue providers and seek confirmation from them when a decision has been made on how they will move forward.

* When can sports training start for vaccinated athletes and volunteers? sports training can re-commence immediately under the Covid Protection Framework, within the guidelines of the framework and the training facility that clubs use and Special Olympics policies.
* Can athletes who are under 12 participate in training (and competition) until the vaccination for under 12 is available? Under 12’s are not currently eligible for the vaccination so they are treated as fully vaccinated for the purposes of the framework and the SO policy. This is subject to change as the environment changes, but clubs will be notified of any changes should they occur. Officially someone under 12 years and 3 months is treated as vaccinated and from 12 years and 3 months they need to be vaccinated.
* What happens if you cross regional boundaries? This is the opposite of what occurred in the alert level system, when you go from red to orange you adopt the protocols of the traffic light that you are in. Therefore, you no longer carry your level or bubble with you, this is not language that is used under the Covid Protection Framework.
* If your region is at red and there are limits of 100 people per event are under 12-year-olds included in the count of who should be included in the 100? Yes
* How many people can I have at my event? There have been some changes here, now at red you are able to have up to **100 athletes** at an event. Coaches and volunteers are now classified as workers and workers are not included in this number.
* Who is a worker? The requirements for workers at events are different to requirements of participants so it is good to understand who is classified as a worker. “People are workers if they carry out work in any capacity for a business or service. It does not matter if this work is paid or not both volunteers and paid employees are workers. This means you must be carrying out work for a sports team, club, facility, or other organisation.”

So for Special Olympics, anyone that is involved in an event that is not an athlete or a spectator is classified as a worker i.e. all coaches, team managers, volunteers are classified as a worker.

* What do we do if we have a positive case at our Gathering or Event and become a location of interest?

If you have a positive case of COVID-19 at or immediately following your event you will most likely receive a phone call from health officials to inform you that your event or venue is a location of interest, and they will step you through your obligations. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the health officials of those at your event to determine who are close and casual contacts.

If you become aware of a positive case at your Event before you are contacted by health officials you will need to communicate this to other volunteers/staff at the event (ensuring you do not disclose the person's identity) and complete an assessment of contacts with the case to provide to the National Investigation and Tracing Unit.

Ensure that you are following contact tracing protocols at your Event so those exposed to the case can be easily contacted.

The Ministry of Health has information here to help you to understand what will happen if your Event has a positive case of COVID-19 and becomes a location of interest.

It is important that you consider what you would need to do if you become a location of interest while planning for your Event. It is much easier to plan for this before it happens, so do take time to consider factors such as:

Who and how you would notify volunteers/staff members and gathering/event participants

Forming a location of interest register so you can record relevant information if you become one.

How you would identify a single point of contact as a liaison point for the Ministry of Health

How you will mitigate your chances of becoming a location of interest as much as possible i.e. high hygiene standards, using signage and announcements to communicate your expectations to attendees, improved airflow and ventilation, face mask use and ensuring contact tracing and My Vaccine pass requirements are adhered to.

**FACEMASKS**

There have been a number of changes with regard to mask rules that are quite important to be aware of.

* Do athletes and volunteers need to wear masks at trainings and events?

At red **all** athletes and volunteers will need to wear masks at training and events at **all** times except when playing sport or eating and drinking.

* What types of facemasks are we required to wear?

Coaches and volunteers will need to wear a **medical grade mask** at **all** times during the event, unless they are also exercising while coaching.

Athletes are still able to wear cloth masks if they choose however you need to be aware that at Red, a face mask needs to be a proper mask that attaches around the head or ears-scarves, bandannas and t-shirts should not be used. Workers who are covered by the Vaccination Order, including Gym, events and hospitality staff need to wear a medical grade mask when in public facing roles. A medical grade mask is a Type IIR/Level 2 mask or above.

* What is a medical grade facemask?

There are a couple of main types of medical grade facemasks that people use, the first one is the most common masks that we see people wearing, these are the disposable masks that are usually blue and pleated. You can purchase these from most supermarkets and pharmacies.

For the highest level of protection, you can use the N95/P2 masks, these at the masks that Healthcare workers use. These need to be worn properly to be effective and you need to ensure you have a tight seal to your face. These masks are quite a bit more expensive and maybe harder to source.

**VACCINATION CERTIFICATES**

* Is SONZ going to require copies of all vaccination certs? SONZ are still working through these details and more information will be provided by end of January 2022. Details will be recorded through GMS verifying that someone has a vaccine pass and the date of expiry, similar to medical records currently for athletes. The logistics of how we will collect this are currently being discussed and we will reach out to some clubs for feedback into this process.
* Is there a standard SONZ vaccination register of all training attendees? Further details on the workings of the vaccination passes will be available by the end of January 2022. We will take this into account as we develop the processes and may include this in the Census register.
* Does fully “vaccinated” include the booster once it’s available or is double vaccinated sufficient? When/if boosters become a requirement for the vaccine pass they will be required for our events
* Would it not be better to have the compulsory date earlier as the certificates expire in May 2022 anyway. Everybody’s certificates will expire at different dates depending on when they are fully vaccinated and when they download the app.
* We presume the booster is not being taken into account given it is not yet mandated by Govt. The validity of your vaccine pass will overtime require the booster so this will be taken into account as it is dealt with through the vaccine pass and we will be relying on the technology from the Ministry of Health to capture this information in everyone’s Covid Pass.
* Competitions need 6 weeks entry time this could lead to a lot of scratchings if athletes are entered while still with a certificate that then expires and we presumed they would be revaccinated? Details on the practical workings of this will be available by the end of January 2022, however we can say that the vaccination passes will be broadly treated in the same way as medical expiry and volunteer expiry for registering for events. Entries are sent out 8 weeks prior to any event and registration close 3 weeks before the event. The event management timeline will be reconfirmed to clubs in the next few weeks.
* How will the certificate be captured? More information will be made on this item in the coming weeks as we finalise our internal processes. We want to introduce a simple process. We do anticipate that certificates will be captured online for new volunteer registrations, and we are currently working through the easiest way to capture our current membership details. We want to make sure that we work with clubs to make this process as smooth as possible for you.
* Do we ask for a copy of their Covid Vaccine Record or use a scanner? What about boosters and potential new vaccines for variants?  This is an evolving space but we do not anticipate that we/you will require the use of a scanner by each club, but you may be required to use one at the venue, however we will need details of vaccine passes to be added to GMS e.g. confirmation of the vaccine pass and date of expiry.
* Do we add this data to the census register? Details will be provided by the end of January 2022 of how this will be completed.
* What if people need support to use the Ministry of Health tools to get the certificate and QR code? We have details around the options available for someone that does not have a smart phone, computer or email account. These details will be listed on our website. You can access this through an 0800 number and some pharmacies, details have been uploaded to our website.
* Medical exemptions - Can athletes and volunteers who have proof of medical exemption participate in training and competitions? Yes this will need to be provided in the same way that a Covid Pass is provided, remember that less than 200 people in NZ are expected to be eligible for a medical exemptions, so there may not be any within the Special Olympics whānau.
* What is our approach to migrants amongst our participants / volunteers / coaches / officials who have been fully vaccinated in their country of origin, but not with a NZ recognised vaccine? SONZ will not exclude based on ethnicity or point of origin. Anyone that has received a vaccination overseas needs to apply to the Ministry of Health to have them recognised. Our understanding is that this process will take up to 14 working days and then if approved the person will have access to the Vaccine Pass. This is an evolving space and there may be changes, for anyone impacted by this we would recommend that they reach out to the Ministry of Health or the Covid website at [Unite against COVID-19 (covid19.govt.nz)](https://covid19.govt.nz/)
* Would consideration of a negative Covid test be able to replace the Vaccination Pass? No, based on Ministry of Health guidance you need to have had the vaccination.

**SPECTATORS**

* Spectators - Are all spectators required to be vaccinated unless they have proof of medical exemption? Spectators will need to comply to the Covid Protection Framework and the guidelines of the venue that they are present at. As things become clearer there may be further information to come in this area.
* Does the framework imply that spectators are only allowed into events under a green traffic light? Spectators will be allowed to attend events as long as they comply to the Covid Protection Plan and fit within the requirements at the level that region is under e.g. at red a vaccinated event can have up to 100 people, but unlimited at orange.
* Do spectators at our events need to be vaccinated, or just comply with the venue requirements? At club events spectators will need to comply to the Covid Protection Plan and the requirements of the venue. Clubs will lead this process for any events they are hosting. SONZ advice around this particular example would be to communicate with your venues often and keep the dialogue open as we navigate through the changing environment.

**SCHOOL EVENTS**

* For school events are students over 12 years old expected to be vaccinated to attend an external event hosted by SONZ e.g. Athletics at Porritt stadium? We are still working through the details of the school events and in 2022 there will be no events in Term One to allow us sufficient time to work with schools on requirements going forward. Additionally, the school sport guidance is still being developed by Sport NZ and they are engaging with the Ministry of Education and Secondary Schools Sports Association. This will also feed into our policy in the first quarter of next year, but it is expected that all school students will need to be vaccinated.

Here are the key things that you need to do to keep well:

* Get vaccinated if you are not already
* Scan in when you are out and about
* Wear a mask where possible
* Maintain 1m distancing if not exercising and where possible
* Train outdoors rather than indoors where possible
* Stay home if you are unwell
* Hand sanitation
* Get a test if you have cold like symptoms
* Wipe down equipment and surfaces in between use where possible.

Remember that this information is accurate at time of writing this and is likely to keep evolving throughout 2022. We will be reviewing the Vaccination Policy no later than 1 April 2021.

**Focusing on the future:**

Getting your Covid Vaccination Pass: [https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccination-certificates/my-vaccine-pass/](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcovid19.govt.nz%2Fcovid-19-vaccines%2Fcovid-19-vaccination-certificates%2Fmy-vaccine-pass%2F&data=04%7C01%7Canjna.maisuriya%40wcc.govt.nz%7Cb8b0b85444db49e37d3a08d9b092d8a1%7Cf187ad074f704d719a80dfb0191578ae%7C0%7C0%7C637734967169132630%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=GtHK3E95%2FBxdFlXlhRx9pEcf2IfkAxPznUntSi1NEGM%3D&reserved=0)

(I have also attached some step by step instructions which may be useful to share with those that are less tech savvy)

The NZ Pass Verifier App: [https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/my-covid-record-proof-vaccination-status/nz-pass-verifier](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.health.govt.nz%2Four-work%2Fdiseases-and-conditions%2Fcovid-19-novel-coronavirus%2Fcovid-19-vaccines%2Fmy-covid-record-proof-vaccination-status%2Fnz-pass-verifier&data=04%7C01%7Canjna.maisuriya%40wcc.govt.nz%7Cb8b0b85444db49e37d3a08d9b092d8a1%7Cf187ad074f704d719a80dfb0191578ae%7C0%7C0%7C637734967169142619%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=FmAsMv6zJE0CXia%2BTgINqk7tqAf%2FE5vDgSCPWAStFb0%3D&reserved=0)