

## **A framework for decisions about vaccination mandates for choirs**

There can be no universal approach to the difficult decision-making process ahead of us. Every choir's culture and environment is different. But consultation and communication is key. However it is clear that, under the upcoming new 'traffic light' [COVID-19 Protection Framework](#), if you do not impose vaccine requirements there will be restrictions on your ability to operate in Green, Orange or Red levels

A suggested framework for approaching decision-making uses the lens of three concentric circles, starting with the broader legislative context, then your community, and finally your choir at the centre.

### **The Legal context**

- What are the rules? What levels are in place, what are rules on gatherings? Guidance on how alert levels apply to choral settings is regularly updated on the [NZCF website](#).
- Under the new framework, “businesses, events, organisations, community, and a range of sectors may legally choose to implement a vaccination entry requirement for customers” – for us this means performers and audiences.
- If your choir decides it does not wish to request proof of vaccine, you will “have to operate with strict limits on capacity and space requirements.” You may not be able to operate at all at Orange and/or Red levels.
- Is it legal to ask your members whether they are vaccinated? The answer is that yes, you may ask, but they are not obliged to share that information.
- Note that any health information you gather must be used only for the purpose intended and must be kept confidential.

### **Your Community**

- Where are you in the country, what are the levels of community transmission and vaccination, what are prevailing attitudes?
- Consider your audience, its makeup and likely concerns, and how you communicate and enforce your policies.
- What conditions are your local venues likely to impose in terms of vaccine mandates? It is possible that developments here might take the decision out of your hands.

## Your Choir

- What is the nature of your 'contract' with each member? Is it formal and described by a constitution, and subscription, or a casual irregular gathering? The decision to require vaccination of choir members will be based on this relationship: it can only be a legal matter if a contract exists determining their rights and responsibilities. You may wish to make vaccination a condition of membership from 2022.
- Does your choir have a culture of inclusion that would be compromised by a vaccine mandate – or is membership a hard-won privilege?
- Would your choir prefer to sing masked and distanced, and accept the continued participation of unvaccinated singers?
- Is a virtual rehearsal an option? Can you include unvaccinated members by recording rehearsals?
- Does your membership include vulnerable people, or unvaccinated children? Are there other options you could explore, like singers' masks and distancing? Is there an outdoor or large venue you could employ for performances?

We strongly advise that you **consult with your choir** before establishing rules. Some choirs have conducted anonymous surveys as a first step to get a sense of the level of existing consensus, before making any rulings.

You may wish to **establish a written policy** once you've worked through these questions, in order to clarify the conditions for participating during this time.

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### **Further NZCF resources:**

[Masks for Singers](#)

[Choirs & the Covid-19 Traffic Light Framework](#)

[NZCF Guidelines for Choirs in Alert Levels 2 & 3](#)