

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



- 2 JUN 2022

Erika Whittome

By email: fyi-request-19270-25a07979@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: C-19 2022-030

Dear Erika

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 and 5 May 2022, transferred from the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, in which you enquire about the vaccination status of her child and vaccination requirements of sporting bodies. The Prime Minister has asked I respond to you as the matters you raise fall within my COVID-19 Response portfolio.

I acknowledge your concerns regarding vaccinating children and the impact COVID-19 restrictions have had on your daughter's participation in sports. As we continue to respond to COVID-19, the ability of children to adapt to new settings under the COVID-19 Protection Framework (Traffic Lights) is a testament to their resilience.

Thank you for your keen interest in child vaccination. Medsafe (New Zealand's medicines regulator) has approved a paediatric version of the Pfizer vaccination for children aged 5 to 11. Vaccination is an important part of our response to COVID-19. Getting vaccinated is a small thing we can do to protect the most vulnerable in New Zealand, including children under 5 years of age, such as the Prime Minister's child.

To ensure children's education is not disrupted by their vaccination status, an amendment was made to the Health Order in March so that all children, including those who are unvaccinated, are able to take part in all activities delivered through schools. This covers a wide range of sports including extra-curricular sport such as training sessions and inter-school competitions, as well as art or cultural activities all of which are important for students' overall activity levels and personal wellbeing.

I note your email details the interactions with sporting bodies on this matter. My Vaccine Passes are no longer required to access indoor or outdoor sports and recreation settings under the Orange Traffic Light setting. However, if they wish, organisations can mandate vaccines for any third party who enters their facility (e.g. contractors, visitors, spectators), or enters an event that they are running (but not school students in school organised events as noted above). They can do this by making vaccination a condition of entry.

Officials continue to review the Traffic Light settings, to ensure they are fit for purpose and protect vulnerable people in New Zealand.

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with me.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

MP
Acting