Introduction

As a consequence of their work related duties for Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC), some employees may be at greater risk of exposure to some infectious diseases than they would normally experience. Additionally some Council employees work in environments where the risk of passing on infectious diseases may have serious consequences for members of the public (i.e. clients of Children’s and Community Services Staff). Council therefore recognises it has a duty of care to all employees as well members of the community to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Bega Valley Shire Council’s employee immunisation program is a condition of employment (except for seasonal influenza vaccination which is available to all council employees on a voluntary basis) for all positions identified as high risk (as identified by job category and risk assessment). Staff in high risk areas are required to participate in an immunisation against the illnesses listed in this procedure. The costs associated with this immunisation program will be borne directly by Council and not the affected employee (provided the employee utilises Councils Nominated Doctor or makes prior arrangements with the Work Health & Safety Coordinator).

Current employees in high risk categories who do not wish to participate in the immunisation program must sign a declaration accordingly and be monitored by their managers/supervisors to ensure all required exposure controls are being implemented. This will include a documented review of work practices related to the risk exposure areas as identified in the section’s risk assessments. Employees, managers and supervisors will also need to be aware of recommendations for non-responders to immunisation.

Scope

This procedure applies to all Council employees who are identified as working in a high risk category and are likely to come into contact with or expose other staff/clients to infectious diseases due to their work related tasks or the job they perform for Council.

Purpose of staff immunisations

The purpose of this procedure is:

- To ensure the risk of exposing Council clients and members of the public (namely Children, Community Services clients) to infectious diseases is minimised.
- As a duty of care, to ensure all employees at risk of contracting infectious diseases are given the opportunity to be appropriately immunised.
- To clarify the procedure for employees, supervisors/managers relating to accessing immunisation and monitor immunisation status.
References and associated documents

The following documents relate to this procedure:

- WHS Act 2011;
- WHS Regulation 2011; and

Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>A virus that causes inflammation of the liver and is transmitted by oral–faecal contact from either contaminated food and water or contaminated hand to mouth contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>A virus that causes inflammation of the liver and is transmitted by blood to blood contact or sexual contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C</td>
<td>Hepatitis C is an infectious disease affecting the liver, caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). No vaccine against hepatitis C is currently available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>A viral infection that affects mainly the nose, throat, bronchi and occasionally, lungs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measles</td>
<td>A highly contagious virus is spread by coughing and sneezing, close personal contact or direct contact with infected nasal or throat secretions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td>Mumps is a salivary gland infection caused by the Rubulavirus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella</td>
<td>Rubella (German measles) is caused by the Rubivirus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertussis</td>
<td>Pertussis (Whooping cough) is an illness caused by a bacterium, Bordetella pertussis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella</td>
<td>Varicella (chickenpox) is an infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which belongs to the herpes group of viruses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seroconversion</td>
<td>Seroconversion is the development of detectable antibodies in the blood directed against an infectious agent. It normally takes some time for antibodies to develop after the initial exposure to the agent. Following seroconversion, a person tests positive in tests based on the presence of antibodies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antibodies</td>
<td>An antibody, also known as an immunoglobulin, is a large Y-shaped protein used by the immune system to identify and neutralize foreign objects like bacteria and viruses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immunisation</td>
<td>The process of bringing about immunity to a particular infective agent (such as a bacterium or virus) by giving a vaccine. The terms vaccination and immunisation are not exactly the same; vaccination is the process of giving a vaccine, while immunisation is the process of both giving a vaccine and the body developing an immune response as a result of the vaccine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vaccine</td>
<td>A product made from whole or extracts of, killed viruses or bacteria, or from live weakened strains of viruses or bacteria.</td>
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</table>
Hepatitis A and B

Hepatitis A and B are infectious diseases, which cause the liver to become inflamed (swollen). Within Bega Valley Shire Council some of our staff are at a higher risk of exposure to these diseases as a result of the work they undertake.

Council recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure all employees whose work related activities may be classified as “At Risk” are required to undertake immunisation against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B.

Hepatitis A or Hepatitis B screening and vaccination is required for the following Council positions:
- Children’s Services Employees (particularly where children have not been toilet trained);
- Water and Sewerage Employees;
- Community Services Staff;
- Works Employees (Town Teams);
- Waste Services Employees; and
- Any employee who may come in contact with an infected person.

Hepatitis A & B antibodies pre screening

To avoid the expense of unnecessary vaccination, it is recommended that at risk individuals undergo a pre-screening blood test to determine pre-existing immunity against Hepatitis A and/or B.

Hepatitis A & B Seroconversion

After the course of immunisation injections has been administered, a seroconversion test should be conducted to ensure the immunisations have been effective. As antibodies last different lengths of time for different people, a blood screen check be done every 5 years.

BVSC Hepatitis A & B Immunisation Program

Bega Valley Shire Council offers free of charge (to employees), immunisation for Hepatitis A & B for all staff identified as being “at risk” in the workplace.

Measles

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease, which affects mostly children. It is transmitted via droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of infected persons. In malnourished children and people with reduced immunity, measles can cause serious complications, including blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, ear infection and pneumonia. Measles can be prevented by immunization.

Unvaccinated young children are at highest risk of measles and its complications, which may include death. Any non-immune person (who has not been vaccinated or previously recovered from the disease) can become infected.

The measles vaccine is incorporated with rubella and/or mumps vaccines (MMR Vaccine) and a single dose vaccination provides long term immunity in most recipients (Note: Protection is greater in two dose vaccine recipients). MMR Vaccine is not recommended in pregnancy due to the theoretical risk of transmission of the rubella component to a susceptible foetus.

Measles vaccination is required for the following positions:
- Children’s Services Employees; and
- Community Services Staff who may come in contact with an infected person.
Isolation of staff with Measles

Any member of staff who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of measles (especially children’s/community services staff) is required to not attend the workplace as the risk of exposing other employees/clients is too great. Paid personal leave is available for sickness related incidents. For more information about Employee Personal Leave entitlements refer to Local Government State Award (2010) and BVSC Procedure 1.2.1(w) Leave.

Workplace Warnings for employees who contract Measles

If any employee who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of measles (especially children’s services staff) it is vital that pregnant co-workers or clients (in the case of parents of child care centres) are adequately warned in order to minimise the risk of passing on this disease to any unborn babies.

BVSC Measles Immunisation Program

Bega Valley Shire Council offers free of charge to employees, immunisation for Measles for all employees identified as being “at risk” in the workplace.

Mumps

Mumps is an infection caused by a virus and it is mostly a mild childhood disease. It most often affects children between five and nine years old, however the mumps virus can infect adults as well. When it does, complications are more likely to be serious. As more children receive mumps vaccine, it is expected cases will become more common in older children than in younger ones.

The mumps vaccine is incorporated with rubella and/or measles vaccines (MMR Vaccine) and a single dose vaccination provides long term immunity in most recipients (Note: Protection is greater in two dose vaccine recipients). MMR Vaccine is not recommended in pregnancy due to the theoretical risk of transmission of the rubella component to a susceptible foetus.

Mumps vaccination is required for the following positions:

- Children’s Services Employees;
- Community Services Staff who may come in contact with an infected person.

Isolation of employees who have contracted Mumps

Any member of staff who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of mumps (especially children’s/community services) is required to not attend the workplace as the risk of exposing other employees/clients is too great. Paid personal leave is available for sickness related incidents. For more information about Employee Personal Leave entitlements refer to Local Government State Award (2014) and BVSC 5.04.1 Leave.

Workplace Warnings for employees who have contracted Mumps

If any employee shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of measles (especially children’s services staff) it is vital that pregnant co-workers or clients (in the case of parents of children at child care centres) are adequately warned in order to minimise the risk of passing on this disease to any unborn babies.

BVSC Mumps Immunisation Program

Bega Valley Shire Council offers free of charge to employees, immunisation for Mumps for all employees identified as being “at risk” in the workplace.
Rubella (German Measles)

Rubella (German Measles) is caused by the *Rubivirus*. The virus is spread from person to person through direct contact with respiratory droplets from an infected person and through droplets in the air. Congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) is an important cause of severe birth defects.

The Rubella vaccine is incorporated with mumps and/or measles vaccines (MMR Vaccine) and a single dose vaccination provides long term immunity in most recipients (Note: Protection is greater in two dose vaccine recipients). MMR Vaccine is not recommended in pregnancy due to the theoretical risk of transmission of the rubella component to a susceptible foetus.

Rubella vaccination is required for the following positions:

- Children’s Services Employees; and
- Community Services Staff who may come in contact with an infected person.

Isolation of staff with Rubella

Any employee who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of Rubella (especially children’s/community services staff) is required to not attend the workplace as the risk of exposing other staff/clients to this virus is too great. Paid personal leave is available for sickness related incidents. For more information about Employee Personal Leave entitlements refer to Local Government State Award (2014) and BVSC *procedure 5.04.1 Leave*.

Workplace Warnings for employees who have contracted Rubella

If any member of staff who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of Rubella (especially children’s services staff) it is vital that pregnant co-workers or clients (in the case of parents of child care centres) are adequately warned in order to minimise the risk of passing on this disease to any un born babies.

BVSC Rubella Immunisation Program

Bega Valley Shire Council offers free of charge to employees, immunisation for Rubella for all employees identified as being “at risk” in the workplace.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a cause of infant death worldwide and continues to be a public health concern even in countries with high vaccination coverage. It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis* and this disease is highly infectious and most serious in babies.

Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease and a single booster dose of adult formulation pertussis vaccine is recommended for carers of young children.

Pertussis vaccination is therefore required for the following positions within Council:

- Children’s Services Employees; and
- Community Services Staff who may come in contact with an infected person.

Isolation of employees with Pertussis

Any employee who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of Pertussiss (especially children’s/community services is required to not attend the workplace as the risk of exposing other employees/clients is too great. Paid personal leave is available for sickness related incidents. For more information about Employee Personal Leave entitlements refer to Local Government State Award (2014) and BVSC *procedure 5.04.1 Leave*. 
Workplace Warnings for employees who have contracted Pertussis

If any employee shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of Pertussis (especially children’s services staff) it is vital that co-workers or clients (in the case of parents of children in child care centres) are adequately warned in order to minimise the risk of passing on this disease.

BVSC Pertussis Immunisation Program

Bega Valley Shire Council offers free of charge to employees, immunisation for Pertussis for all employees identified as being “at risk” in the workplace.

Varicella (Chickenpox)

Varicella (Chickenpox) is a highly contagious infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which is a member of the herpes group of viruses. It is usually a mild disease that lasts a short time in healthy children. However, it can be severe in adults and may cause serious complications in people of any age. The disease is spread by direct contact with people who are infected and it is often more serious in adults.

Symptoms of varicella take between 10 and 21 days (14 to 16 days on average) to show after infection. The main symptom of varicella is a rash that turns into open lesions (small wounds), which crust over. Varicella virus can reactivate many years after the initial infection and cause shingles (herpes zoster). Varicella is a vaccine preventable disease.

Varicella vaccination is required for the following positions:

- Children’s Services Employees; and
- Any employee who may come in contact with an infected person.

Isolation of employees with Varicella

If any employee shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of varicella (especially children’s services staff) it is vital co-workers or clients (in the case of parents of children at child care centres) are adequately warned in order to minimise the risk of passing on this disease. Paid personal leave is available for sickness related incidents. For more information about Employee Personal Leave entitlements refer to Local Government State Award (2014) and BVSC procedure 5.04.1 Leave.

BVSC Varicella Immunisation Program

Bega Valley Shire Council offers free of charge to employees, immunisation for Varicella for all employees identified as being “at risk” in the workplace.

Influenza

Influenza is an acute viral infection that spreads easily from person to person and can affect anybody in any age group. Influenza causes annual epidemics that peak during winter in temperate regions and is a serious public health problem which may cause severe illnesses and deaths.

Influenza is a vaccine preventable disease, but vaccines need to be given each year, because the viruses are always changing.

Influenza vaccination is highly recommended for the following positions (but is not a condition of employment):

- Children’s Services Employees
- Customer Service Employees, including
- Community Services Staff
- Cultural Services, (particularly Library Employees and Bega Gallery Employees)
- Any employee who may come in contact with an infected person.

**Isolation of employees with Influenza**

Any BVSC employee who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of influenza is required to not attend the workplace as the risk of exposing other employees/clients is too great. Paid personal leave is available for sickness related incidents. For more information about Employee Personal Leave entitlements refer to Local Government State Award (2014) and BVSC Procedure 5.04.1 Leave.

**BVSC Influenza Immunisation Program**

Bega Valley Shire Council conducts a yearly influenza vaccination program and this service is available to all employees on a voluntary basis.

**Responsibilities**

**Bega Valley Shire Council (the Employer)**

Bega Valley Shire Council has a duty of care to ensure the following:

- The Health, Safety and Welfare of their employees as legislated as per the WHS Act 2011.
- Council is to meet all necessary immunisation costs to ensure it fulfils its workplace health and safety obligation to employees identified as being at risk.

**Human Resources**

Bega Valley Shire Council Human Resources Section is required to ensure the following:

- Provide Vaccination Information to all employees classified as being “At Risk”.
- Ensure all employees classified as being “At Risk” complete the relevant Immunisation Declaration Form (Annex A).
- The Work Health and Safety Coordinator will ensure the Immunisation Declaration Form is appropriately registered on the employee’s personnel file.
- The Work Health and Safety Coordinator will ensure that all recruitment advertising of “At Risk” positions will mention that immunisation is a condition of employment.

**Supervisor/Manager responsibilities**

For all Manager/Supervisors of employees in positions identified as at risk of exposure to infectious diseases the following is required:

- It is the responsibility of the relevant manager/supervisor to identify (in accordance with legislation) whether a position has a potential risk of exposure to infectious diseases as a result of the work performed for council.
- Discuss the position’s potential risks of exposure to infectious diseases with the new or existing employee.
- Advise the employee of their access to an immunisation program prior to commencing the duties at risk.
- Ensure terms of this Procedure are implemented and complied with in their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure their employee/s completes the relevant immunisation declaration as well as the relevant immunisation record form and ensures the completed forms are returned to the Human Resources section.
Employee responsibilities

For all employees in positions identified as at risk of exposure to infectious diseases the following is required:

- Participate voluntarily in attending clinics to undergoing testing as required for medical assessment and or immunisation.

- Complete the immunisation declaration form and return it to the Human Resources section prior to receiving any treatment. (If an employee decides that they do not wish to participate in Council’s immunisation process they must notify Council of this decision by completing the Infectious Diseases Immunisation Declaration form at Annex A of this Procedure).

- Understand that by volunteering to be immunised by Council’s nominated Doctor it is their responsibility to find out from the medical staff when they are required to receive additional booster/immunisations to complete the program.

- Participating employees are required to comply with the immunisation schedule recommended by Council’s Doctor and keep track of the immunisations they receive by completing the relevant Immunisation Record Form (Annex B & C) and return it to the Human Resources Section.

- Any employee who shows signs, symptoms or a diagnosis of any infectious disease listed in this procedure has a duty of care to other employees and council clients to take leave from the work place in order to prevent exposing others to their illness.
Annex A - infectious diseases immunisation declaration

Employee Name: _________________________________ Staff No: _______________________
Group/Section: D.O.B: ___________________________

I have read the attached information concerning the immunisations and occupational risks regarding the following diseases:

(Please indicate what immunisations you require by placing a ✓ in the relevant circle or writing n/a if you are not classed as being at risk for that disease)

- Hepatitis A and B
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Influenza
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

I declare that:

- I have previously received Immunisations for the diseases I have indicated above and do not want further testing or immunisation.
- I would like an immunisation status check (if applicable) and a further booster/immunisation if required.
- I do not want testing or immunisation.

I understand that by volunteering to be immunised by Councils nominated Doctor it is my responsibility to find out from the medical staff when I am required to attend the practice to receive additional booster/immunisations.

I understand it is my responsibility to keep track of my immunisations by completing the BVSC Immunisation Record Form and returning the completed form to the Human Resources Section.

I understand that by agreeing to receive immunisations I will authorise my employer to obtain and release information, either verbal or written, in relation to this immunisation to allow Council to adequately monitor and review the immunisation process.

I understand that all medicines and vaccines carry various risks and benefits and that if I have any concerns regarding my immunisation it is my responsibility to seek further guidance.

I understand that once my immunisations are complete I will inform Human Resources so that a serological conversion (immunisation status) blood test can be arranged.

Employee’s Signature: _________________________________ Date:__________________
Annex B - Hepatitis A & B immunisation record

This form is to be used by employees receiving Hepatitis A & B immunisation to keep track of all appointments. The completed form should be returned to the Work Health and Safety Coordinator

Employee Name: ________________________________________________________________

Group/Section: D.O.B: ___________________________

**Hepatitis A and B Screening Capital Pathology**

A blood screening is used to determine there are no Hepatitis A or Hepatitis B antibodies present, if the patient shows no antibodies than the immunisation program begins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TWINRIX (combined Hepatitis A and B) Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunisation</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Injection administered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Injection administered (1 month after 1st dose)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Injection administered (6 months after the 1st dose)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**HAVRIX (Hepatitis A)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunisation</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st injection administered</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd injection administered 6 – 12 months after the 1st injection.</td>
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</table>

**ENGEX B (Hepatitis B)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunisation</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st injection administered.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd injection administered 1 month after 1st injection.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd injection administered 6 months after 1st injection.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Hepatitis A and B Serological conversion Capital Pathology**

Blood sample taken to determine if Hepatitis A & B antibodies have been produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex C - infectious diseases immunisation record

This form is to be used by employees receiving immunisations (Excluding Hepatitis A & B – this is recorded on a separate form) so they can keep track of all appointments. The completed form should be returned to the Work Health and Safety Coordinator so that it can be placed on the employee’s personnel file.

Employee Name: ________________________________________________________________

Group/Section: D.O.B: ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunisation</th>
<th>Appointment Date</th>
<th>Next Immunisation Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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