

Health and Safety Policy – May 2023

Title: **AACM Masking and Vaccination Policy & Procedure**

Date approved:

Date last Revised: May 25, 2023

Background:

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) declared COVID-19 a pandemic virus. COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by the severe acute syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). It may be characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and other symptoms. Asymptomatic infection is also possible. The likelihood of disease severity increases with age and is elevated in those with underlying medical conditions. Peel Region, in which the AACM is located, was one of the areas that had been particularly hard hit by the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. Three years later, as of May 5, 2023, the head of the W.H.O declared an end to COVID-19 as a public health emergency, but stressed “it does not mean the disease is no longer a global threat. Death rates have decreased and the pressure on once overwhelmed health systems, has eased.”

Purpose:

The Active Adult Centre of Mississauga is a masking and vaccine-positive organization. The AACM recognizes the importance of immunization in combination with effective masking practices, to safeguard the health and well-being of its seniors’ community and its duty to look after those who use its facility. The purpose of the Masking and Vaccination Policy is to provide guidelines pertaining to the expectations and requirements of those who attend the Centre. In the face of strong evidence demonstrating that masking continues to provide a level of protection against COVID-19, its variants, and other airborne diseases, and recognizing changing community norms, a universal Masking Policy is to remain in place for the AACM. The AACM is also removing the requirement that all who attend the Centre no longer need to be fully inoculated (received two doses) with a COVID-19 vaccine(s) approved by Health Canada.

Policy:

All attendees of the Active Adult Centre of Mississauga (including employees, members, guests, volunteers, students and contractors) attending the Centre for a **program, service, show, or meal** must mask in all common areas, when not participating a class/ activity or eating.

Physical distancing and the mandatory wearing of face masks (that cover both the nose and chin) **will continue** at the Centre regardless of a person’s vaccination status, for such a period

as determined by the AACM, upon review of current research, community trends, and member feedback. Attendees of the AACM or one of its off-site classes/ activities are no longer required to show proof of vaccination status to participate on-site.

Failure to comply with this modified policy may result in denied access to the Centre's on-site programs / activities based on the assessment of AACM staff and management, and in consideration of the Centre's responsibility to accommodate individuals as possible.

Procedure:

Infection prevention and control measures will continue at the facility, as well as the implementation of physical distancing on-site.

To ensure the protection and safety of individuals at the AACM, all must mask while on-site in defined common areas. Masks will be either K95 or medical facemasks worn properly over the nose and chin to help curtail any spread of infectious diseases. Common areas are defined as Centre hallways, foyer / lobby, universal bathroom, Administration office, travel desk, and shared spaces such as the Wellness Room. Sanitization of common spaces / items / equipment will be a shared responsibility between the Centre and activity participants.

Further, physical distancing in classes will be maintained for on-site activities, and new health protocol signage posted and distributed – to include verbiage to the effect that *“the Centre remains a mask-friendly facility, that encourages individuals to maintain up-to-date vaccinations, as part of a caring community of seniors, including vulnerable persons”*.

This policy comes into effect on June 1, 2023 and will end on October 16, 2023. The AACM will continue to monitor its risk mitigation strategies, as well as developing public health information in an evolving environment/ landscape with regard to community safety risks. The organization may extend or modify this policy as required, notifying its Membership in a timely manner.

The aforementioned represents the AACM's risk mitigation strategy to safely and gradually return to a state of “normal” at our Centre over time.