

. Lend

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■ NEWS

UNVACCINATED, NON-COMPLIANT **EDUCATORS FACE CONSEQUENCES**

KATHY YANCHUS

kvanchus@metroland.com

Unvaccinated employees of the Halton District School Board who do not follow the terms of the provincially mandated vaccination compliance procedure will face a "progressive response."

"They would be reminded of requirements and failing to do so would trigger further action on the part of human resources in terms of ensuring compliance," said Superintendent of Human Resources, Sari Taha.

'Would it result in immediate removal from the workplace? I would say no ... at least not initially."

There could be "all sorts of reasonable grounds" for an employee not filing one test result, however, if there is a pattern of negligence to comply with reporting guidelines, "that will result in a progressive response, be it a reminder, and also an explicit disclaimer that this may result in removing you from the workplace."

Currently, 93.6 per cent of board employees have been vaccinated, or 9.010 employees out of a total of 9,983. 22 employees are medically exempt.

There are 554 employees who have responded as unvaccinated, and the remainder are of unknown vaccination status; the latter group will be treated as unvaccinated individuals. meaning they will be required to submit the results of two weekly COVID-19

rapid tests and undergo vaccine educational training.

1.500 Approximately kits, which include 25 tests each, have been delivered to employee residences, as far away as Grimsby, Guelph and Brampton, with the remainder of the 2,000 kits to be delivered by the end of this week.

Along with its employees, the board is collecting and managing the data of a second cohort which includes school volunteers and third-party providers.

"This has been a significant undertaking by the school board ... A lot of resources have been dedicated and diverted to managing this process."

The average cost per rapid testing kit, plus shipping and handling, is well over \$70; not just a significant cost but an ongoing one, said Taha.

The kits are provided to the board by the province, however, the cost of delivery, and the cost of managing the separate platform being used to collect and report data from the second cohort could be upwards of \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually,

Approximately \$250,000 has been put aside so far from board reserves to cover many of these COVID-19related costs, said Superintendent of Business Services. Roxana Negoi.

"We have raised this with the Ministry (of Education). It's on their radar as well," said Negoi.

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