

5 May 2026

REF: OIA 88457

Erika Whittome
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Tēnā koe Erika

Request for Official Information: Vaccine Mandates at Treaty Settlements office

Thank you for your correspondence of 5 April 2026 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. What number of staff did your office terminate or place on any form of "extended leave" due to vaccination mandates in 2021/2022?*
- 2. When did you initiate and then remove your policy for only employing vaccinated staff?*
- 3. Would you please kindly share the emails and correspondence regarding this decision to initiate and then remove this policy for only hiring vaccinated staff?*
- 4. Please share a copy of the policy in its draft and final form*
- 5. Please share the workplace risk assessment for the Covid-19 disease*

A response to your request is set out below.

In responding, we need to note up front that we did not exist as Te Tari Whakataou at the time your request relates to. At that time, Te Arawhiti was the relevant departmental agency and, as such, we are providing historical information related to the decisions and actions of that agency at the time.

In response to the parts of your request relating to extended leave, please note that Te Tari Whakataou does not record data on the reason why a staff member goes on leave without pay. New reporting would need to be created to answer these parts of your request and there is no requirement under the Act for agencies to do this to respond to a request. Therefore, I am refusing these parts of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information is not held by Te Tari Whakataou, or any other agency subject to the Act.

In response to the remaining parts of question one, I can advise that there were no employees terminated for COVID vaccination reasons in Te Tari Whakataou.

Question two asks about the dates Te Tari Whakatau COVID Vaccination Policy (the Policy) was initiated and then removed. The Policy was effective as of 1 February 2022, and subsequently removed 11 November 2022. An update to the Policy, removing requirement for evidence of vaccination, was made effective 1 August 2022.

In response to question 3, please see **attached** copies of internal guidance and decision documents shared by Te Tari Whakatau relating to implementation of the Policy, and subsequently to no longer require evidence of COVID vaccination, and to place the Policy on hold indefinitely.

In response to question four relating to a copy of the Policy in draft form, please note that Te Tari Whakatau does not have access to Te Arawhiti's draft Policy. Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the document alleged to contain the information requested, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found. Please see **attached** a copy of the finalised Te Tari Whakatau COVID Vaccination Policy released to you in full.

In response to question five, the Ministry of Justice completed Safety Plans that were submitted to WorkSafe as they transitioned between COVID-19 Alert Levels. **Attached** is the one completed in May 2020 as part of the first change in Alert levels.

Te Arawhiti was not explicitly mentioned in those plans. However, Te Arawhiti was captured as a tenant of the Justice Centre and as one part of the Ministry. All protocols that were designed during this period also applied to Te Arawhiti.

After considering our response to your request, we can advise that it will not be published on our website.

If you have any concerns about the information in this response being published on our website please contact us by emailing officialcorrespondence@whakatau.govt.nz by 5.00pm on Tuesday 19 May 2026.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or phone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Peter Alsop
Director, Policy, Corporate and Technical Services

Document number	Date	Document description	Extent of information provided	Reason for withholding/refusing	Page
1.	11/05/2020	COVID-19 Safety Plan - MOJ	Released in full		1-5
2.	11/1/2022	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Decision Document – Te Arawhiti FINAL	Released in full		6-17
3.	11/1/2022	Decision to implement COVID-19 Vaccination Policy - Email from CE Te Arawhiti	Parts withheld	s 9(2)(a)	18
4.	1/02/2022	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy – Te Arawhiti FINAL	Released in full		19-23
5.	27/07/2022	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Decision Document – Te Arawhiti UPDATED	Released in full		24-34
6.	29/07/2022	Decision to no longer require vaccination for staff – Email from CE Te Arawhiti	Released in full		35
7.	1/08/2022	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy – Te Arawhiti UPDATED	Released in full		36-42
8.	1/08/2022	COVID-19 and general illness guidelines	Released in full		43-47
9.	11/11/2022	Decision to place COVID-19 Vaccination Policy on hold indefinitely – Email from Senior Advisor OCE Te Arawhiti	Parts withheld	s 9(2)(a)	48
10.	11/11/2022	COVID-19 and general illness guidelines - UPDATED	Released in full		49-51

RELEASED