

Judiciary updates Vaccine Pass arrangement for entering court buildings

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

In light of the Government's recent announcement earlier this month on lowering the applicable age of the Vaccine Pass to cover children aged 5 to 11 (Note 1) and adjusting the vaccination requirements applicable to persons aged 12 or above under the Vaccine Pass (Note 2), the Judiciary announced today (September 27) its updated arrangements for entry into Judiciary premises, which will take effect on September 30.

Starting from September 30, all persons aged 5 or above who would like to enter the Judiciary premises must comply with the Government's latest vaccination requirements under the Vaccine Pass, unless they themselves, or their guardians, carers or persons under their care are parties to or witnesses in a legal proceeding.

The Judiciary will also extend the exemption for persons with prior permission from the presiding Judge or Judicial Officer concerned to attend a hearing (currently restricted to legal representatives) to cover jurors of ongoing proceedings. This is mainly to cater for situations where the presence of a particular juror is considered necessary to ensure the continuation and timely conclusion of an ongoing jury proceeding.

The above updated entry requirements seek to strike a balance between protecting public health and ensuring the right to justice such that the Judiciary can continue to carry out its normal business at all levels of court as safely as circumstances permit.

The present requirement on all Judges and Judicial Officers and Judiciary support staff, as well as jurors, legal teams and prosecuting authorities for jury proceedings, to carry out rapid antigen tests every day to enhance public health protection will continue.

The Judiciary will continue to conduct active checking of the Vaccine Pass at the points of entry by using the "QR Code Verification Scanner" mobile application developed by the Government for scanning the relevant QR code and keeping the record for 31 days. Court users are advised to allow additional time for checking when they come to Judiciary premises for court business.

The Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the public health situation with a view to putting in place timely and appropriate measures. Court users should check the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk) for updated information, and follow the instructions of the Judiciary staff and security personnel.

For enquiries, court users may call the Judiciary's hotline at 2869 0869 during office hours.

Note 1: The Government's latest Vaccine Pass arrangements applicable to children aged 5 to 11 are as follows:

- (a) Starting from September 30, children aged 5 to 11 are required to have received at least the first dose within three months to comply with the vaccination requirements under the Vaccine Pass. If they received their first dose three months ago or earlier, they are required to receive the second dose in order to continue to be eligible for using the Vaccine Pass; and
- (b) Starting from November 30, all children aged 5 to 11 will be required under the Vaccine Pass to have received the second dose.

Note 2: The Government will adjust the vaccination requirements applicable to persons aged 12 or above under the Vaccine Pass in two stages:

- (a) Starting from September 30, the grace period for persons aged 12 or above to receive the third dose after the second dose will be shortened from the original six months to five months. For those who had received the second dose within five months, their Vaccine Pass is still valid, but they must receive the third dose within five months after receiving the second dose (instead of the original six months) in order to continue using the Vaccine Pass afterwards.
- (b) Starting from November 30, persons aged 12 or above are required to have received the third dose so as to meet the vaccination requirements under the Vaccine Pass.