

Greece launches mandatory testing for unvaccinated workers

September 13 2021



A Greek Orthodox priest blesses students in a classroom of a junior high school in Athens, Monday, Sept. 13, 2021. Public and private sector employees will have to pay for weekly tests or carry a vaccination certificate to gain access to their place of work, while unvaccinated children at high schools which reopened Monday are being given test kits distributed at the government's expense. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris

Greece on Monday introduced mandatory weekly testing for all unvaccinated workers as it struggles to boost vaccination rates that are lagging the European Union average.

Public and private sector employees will have to pay for weekly tests or carry a vaccination certificate to gain access to their place of work, while unvaccinated children at high schools, which reopened Monday, are being given test kits distributed at government expense.

Similar restrictions will also apply at sports stadiums, museums and [archaeological sites](#), as well as indoor leisure areas like cinemas and restaurants.

Some 56% of Greece's residents have been fully vaccinated, while the average rate in the EU is just over 60%.

Greece has imposed vaccine mandates for [health care workers](#) and allows the vaccination of children starting at age 12.

Lockdowns last year pushed the economy into recession, with 2020 output shrinking by 8.2%. Government officials say the country cannot afford to halt economic activity for a second year.

"At the moment, the pandemic (in Greece) is showing signs of de-escalation, so the measures seem to be working," Development Minister Adonis Georgiadis told private Skai television.

"Unfortunately this de-escalation is accompanied by the deaths of our fellow citizens who are unvaccinated. It hurts me to know that these people could have lived, but they fell victim to conspiracy theories."



A student checks her temperature as she arrives at a junior high school in Athens, Monday, Sept. 13, 2021. Public and private sector employees will have to pay for weekly tests or carry a vaccination certificate to gain access to their place of work, while unvaccinated children at high schools which reopened Monday are being given test kits distributed at the government's expense. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris



Children enter a classroom with a view of signs with health guidance on the wall in the foreground, in Athens, Monday, Sept. 13, 2021. Public and private sector employees will have to pay for weekly tests or carry a vaccination certificate to gain access to their place of work, while unvaccinated children at high schools which reopened Monday are being given test kits distributed at the government's expense. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris



A teacher wearing a protective face mask speaks to her pupils in junior high school in Athens, Monday, Sept. 13, 2021. Public and private sector employees will have to pay for weekly tests or carry a vaccination certificate to gain access to their place of work, while unvaccinated children at high schools which reopened Monday are being given test kits distributed at the government's expense. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris



Students walk in the corridor of a junior high school in Athens, Monday, Sept. 13, 2021. Public and private sector employees will have to pay for weekly tests or carry a vaccination certificate to gain access to their place of work, while unvaccinated children at high schools which reopened Monday are being given test kits distributed at the government's expense. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris

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