



Diocese of Christchurch

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At 7 September 2020

HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 2

INTRODUCTION

The Anglican Diocese of Christchurch is committed to complying with all legislation surrounding the pandemic Alert Levels so that all ministers, staff, parishioners, worshippers and external users of our church and hall premises are kept as safe as possible.

While the relaxing of rules from Alert Level 2 allows more contact with others (than Levels 3 and 4), it requires more vigilance on the part of everyone in New Zealand because Level 2 is not the same as Level 1.

These guidelines draw on material published by the Auckland and Waiapu Dioceses and the Parish of Fendalton and these sources are gratefully acknowledged, along with input from colleagues in the Diocese of Christchurch.

These guidelines are issued by the Bishop of Christchurch, Peter Carrell, with due authority as Bishop and dutiful responsibility as Chair of Synod and Standing Committee (governing bodies of the Diocese) and as Chair of the Church Property Trustees (legal owner of the premises referred to herein). All who use church premises in the Diocese of Christchurch are requested to share in this responsibility for the good of all in our community at this time.

In this document there are guidelines for:

- Use of church premises generally and particularly for church services
- Conduct of church services including Communion services
- Conduct of parish and community activities in church premises
- Conduct of small groups in parishioners' homes
- Pastoral care in respect of visits to homes and conduct of service
- Conduct of an audit of church premises before services resume
- Pastoral care of the elderly and people "at risk"
- Guidance for Ministry with Children
- A template for contact tracing records

An alternative approach to Guidance is available in another document which is in the form of a chart with ticks and crosses for a list of events, activities and services, along with a couple of question marks, meaning such activities are permitted but only if local decision makers are agreed and all due care is taken.

Chaplains are asked to adapt the Guidelines appropriately to the context of your respective ministry units.

Let's stay safe, and be considerate of the health of others, as well as of ourselves.

The following is based on advice current at the date of publication and may be subject to change.

That advice includes the document [5617 Covid 19 Factsheet Religious 4.0](#)

PRINCIPLES, COMMITMENTS AND KEY ADVICE

1. Love for one another guides our actions: our aim is to maintain good health for all members of our congregations, for all visitors to our services and for all users of our premises.
2. With love as our guide we seek to be vigilant and careful, but we do not need to be fearful.
3. When we gather we do so safely through following guidance about physical distancing between each other, about cleanliness of our hands through washing, and hygienic treatment of surfaces
4. We do not join a gathering when we are unwell or if our health is “high risk.”
5. We hope for the best and prepare for the worst.
6. We **commit to regular, consistent recording of contact information for all who come to our buildings: contact tracing is critical to eradication of the virus from our islands.**
7. The guidance here applies to **parishioners and to members of churches, clubs and societies which use our premises.** Compliance is a requirement of acceptance of any booking of premises.
8. Advice is that the virus can remain on paper money for 4 days, on cardboard for 24 hours, up to 3 days on plastic, and up to 3 days on steel. <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/coronavirus-lifespan-on-surfaces-graphic-2020-3?op=1&r=US&IR=T>
9. Government guidelines and directions, as regularly updated, are found here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>. Nothing herein is intended to contradict the guidelines and directions of the NZ Government.
10. If in doubt about a proposed service, activity or event, ask whether it could be postponed until we are at Level 1

GUIDANCE

Public Access

- Churches, halls, church offices will be open to the public in the usual way.
- Numbers of people within a building at any given time will be monitored and must not exceed **100 (one hundred people) plus leaders and/or workers and/or staff for a service or event.**
- All persons entering church premises must be “contact traceable” which means participants in activities, events and services must have information recorded: *at least* name, phone number. **A template for contact tracing records is provided at the foot of this document.** QR codes must be displayed prominently and must be easy to photograph.
- Hand sanitizer must be available for each person entering the venue.

Church Services – General Guidance

The maximum of 100 plus leaders and/or workers for a religious gathering applies to funerals, memorial services, weddings and baptisms.

- Congregants must be signed in for the purposes of “contact tracing”.
 - This information must include name and phone number.
 - Regular worshippers on a roll with the above information could be marked off on that roll.
 - For hygiene, the recording of this information should be undertaken by one or two designated persons rather than have each individual sign themselves in.
 - To ensure 100% recording of arrivals, there should be one designated entry to each service.
 - **A template for contact tracing records is provided at the foot of this document.**
- Hand sanitizer must be available for each person entering the venue and as they depart.

- People whose health is “high risk” are asked to remain at home.
- On-line worship will be available in the Diocese for those who are ‘at risk’ and cannot attend church, and all churches are requested to advertise the availability of these services.
- Physical distancing of 1 metre between people (not otherwise in the same bubble) should be maintained.
- **The social distancing requirement may mean that the maximum number able to be present may be less than 100 (in our smallest churches).**
- **Each ministry unit is asked to manage their regular rota of worship services to provide opportunity to worship within the constraints of maximum numbers/social distance constraints.**
 - **Such management could include a “booking” system to ensure no one comes to church who has to be turned away.**
 - **Such management could include provision of online worship services.**
- **Constraints re numbers apply to funerals and weddings as well as to regular worship services.**
- **Wearing of face masks is recommended but is not yet mandated by the Government.**
- No ministry unit or minister is to take on an unbearable workload. The constraints of Level 2 may be an opportunity to work collaboratively with neighbouring ministry units.
- No food or drink should be served following any of the services **unless** rules for serving food and drink observed in cafes and restaurants can be followed.
 - This is a simple manageable approach compared to laying down a raft of Diocesan guidelines re food and drink.
 - Any church contemplating serving of food and drink must carefully review whether serving of food and drink would tempt people to breach social distancing guidelines.
 - In particular there is to be **no sharing of drinks, cups, plates, cutlery or other items.**
- Handles, light switches and benches should be sanitized before and after services.
- Ordained or lay ministers are not to take any Rest Home services (unless invited to do so by the Rest Home).
- Offerings of money and non-perishable foodstuffs are to be dropped into stationary receptacles. Noting above advice about how long the virus can last on certain surfaces, disposable gloves should be worn by those who count the offertory.
- **Votive Candle stands:** these are places where people could gather, and so should be removed during Level 2, so that physical distancing can be maintained.
- As we prepare for our services in Level 2, please refer to further Guidance given at the foot of this document.

Church Services – Holy Communion

- Communion will be of one kind only (i.e. bread only).
- The presiding priest will consecrate a small amount of wine which she or he consumes alone.
- There will be no physical sharing of The Peace.
 - It is recommended that people turn to one another and greet one another with a nod of the head, a smile, a wave.
 - There should not be movement around the church during the Peace.
- A minimal number of persons should be involved in the sanctuary, in actions to do with setting the Table and clearing the Table. **The recommended maximum is 2 persons (i.e. presider and an assistant).**
- **Where possible only** the presiding priest should handle the wafers before, during and after the service. **If necessary, a second person, with sanitized hands, could assist with distribution of wafers when numbers are over 50 persons in the congregation.**
- **There should not be an offertory procession as this increases the number of hands touching the vessels used in communion.**

- Worshippers moving forward for to receive communion should observe physical distancing as they queue in the central aisle.
- If possible, worshippers should sanitize their hands just before receiving the bread of communion.
- For avoidance of touching surfaces, communicants should receive standing (rather than kneeling at a communion rail).

Church Services – Robes and Books

- Robes are not to be shared (e.g. between clergy, choir members).
- If a robe is to be hung in a cupboard with several days between uses, any virus present likely will die; if robes are to be used more frequently, they should be taken home by their users.
- Books (prayer books, hymn books): consideration needs to be given to not using books during this time (unless there is a week between uses).
- If there is no alternative to using books, consideration should be given to encouraging parishioners to bring their own prayer books.

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Memorial Services

- For Weddings, Funerals, Memorial Services: all above guidance applies.
- Baptisms: if possible, these should be postponed until we reach Level 1. If there is pastoral need to continue with a planned baptism in Level 2, all due care should be taken.

Parish and Community Groups

- Midweek parish and community groups may meet provided ‘at risk’ people stay at home, there is physical distancing of at least 1 metre and consumption of food and drink observes all government regulations re such hospitality in Level 2.
- Mainly Music: please see Guidelines re Children’s Ministry.

Staff

- Staff who are not ‘at risk’ can work full time from their ministry unit office providing a 1 metre physical distance from other staff members is observed.
- No pastoral care visits to homes, hospitals or rest homes unless there is a clear invitation to do so from the institution concerned.
- Meetings can take place, provided the 1 metre physical distancing rule is maintained
- Hand hygiene standards continue.
- Staff meetings should continue online if one or more staff members is “at risk.”

General

- Physical separation guidelines must be followed. This is 1 metre in workplaces and 2 metres outside.
- Hand sanitizer must be used and any surfaces used by more than one person must be sanitised.
- If a kitchen is being used, staff must use their own mugs and not communal ones.
- Cough and personal hygiene etiquette is to be maintained.
- Repairs and maintenance of premises: these must be carried out by tradespeople who will know how to conduct their work according to mandated standards of hygiene and physical separation.

Toilets

These are a potential area of risk:

- bottleneck on entry and exit
- involves touching of doors and door handles (surfaces which could harbour the virus)
- it may not be possible to provide hot water and paper towels for hand washing and drying

However, **removing access to the toilets is not recommended**: this would lead to other problems.

Risks can be mitigated in two ways:

- have people queue in ways that maintain one metre physical distance (tape on floor and appropriate signage)
- ensure hand sanitising takes place for everyone on entry into worship space

Check: Do we have paper towels available?

Check: What signage or floor marking is needed for toilets?

Pastoral Care and Home Communion

- 1) Visiting should be by pre-arrangement only.
- 2) Visitor (clergyperson or lay visitor) should hand sanitise on entry and exit.
- 3) Home communion (in one kind only) will be by reserved sacrament. This both reduces the amount of time the visitor is in the home, and also provides an important link with the congregation in which the sacrament was consecrated.
- 4) Options for administering communion are for the wafer to be dropped onto the person's hand, or placed onto a piece of kitchen paper for the recipient to pick up themselves.
- 5) When prayer is offered as part of the healing rite, no physical contact. Alternatives to the 'laying on of hands' include:
 - a. Holding your hands towards the person
 - b. Getting someone else in the person's bubble to put their hand on the person's shoulder
 - c. Getting the person to cross their own hands over their chest.
- 6) No anointing should happen, unless the person is at the point of death. (The reasoning here is connected with advice to maintain one metre physical distancing, and to avoid touching faces.) If called to offer care to someone who is dying, the use of disposable gloves is appropriate.

The visitor may wish to consider declining the offer any offer of refreshments while in the home, so as to decrease risk of possible infection.

MINISTRY INVOLVING CHILDREN

- **Children's programmes may take place at Level 2 provided:**
- Leaders of such programmes understand and acknowledge compliance standards on physical distancing and others aspects of care for children – standards set by the NZ government.
- Parents/caregivers clearly indicate to the co-ordinator of the programme that they understand that the programme will be run as best possible in compliance with government standards but the reality is that interactions between children and adult leaders will occur **similar to children's current experience in childcare centres and in schools.**
- Closure will take place at short notice in the event of news that there is community transmission in the local area. (As at 07 September 2020 there is no community transmission of Covid 19 in the Diocese of Christchurch).

MINISTRY INVOLVING YOUTH

ENJOY EVENT – HEAD HOME

In Level 2 the approach to running Youth events is to focus on creating COVID-19 Level 2 safe environments and practices and to "Enjoy Event – Head Home", ensuring there is not prolonged periods of unstructured time together.

Youth Ministry in Level 2 is about creating opportunities for young people to connect with God and each other, but in an controlled environment and over a controlled timeframe.

Summary of Youth Ministry at Level 2 Youth Leaders have a separate Description Chart for further details

Young People	Youth Group <i>suggest no more than 1.5 hours social distancing Until further notice group meetings to be no larger than 100 people</i>	Small Groups <i>Social distancing keep groups no larger than 100 people</i>	Mentoring <i>social distancing</i>	Worship Team <i>social distancing Practices under 2 hrs</i>	No Camps	Schools <i>less than 2 hrs in school social distancing Until further notice contact with groups no more than 100 people</i>
Youth Leadership	Leadership Team Meetings <i>less than 2 hours social distancing Until further notice no more than 100 people</i>	Supervision <i>social distancing</i>	Training Sessions <i>less than 2 hours social distancing Until further notice no more than 100 people</i>	Networking <i>social distancing Until further notice no more than 100 people</i>	No Camps	Office <i>social distancing Until further notice no more than 100 people</i>

Ministry to Elderly People and People at Risk During COVID-19 Alert Levels

Situation

The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in churches having to provide worship sessions and pastoral care under restrictive conditions. As we move back to a normal way of life, through the various Alert Levels, we have to consider how we, as a church, will support elderly people and other people in our communities who are vulnerable to illness.

Our Ministry Purpose

Our ministry purpose will be to provide in a Christian manner, an environment in which the elderly people and other vulnerable people will feel safe, respected, cared for and, above all else, welcomed.

Achieving Our Ministry Purpose:

Alert Level 4: At Alert Level 4, parishes provided the opportunity to worship by on-line services by various means. Pastoral care was also provided by various means such as telephone or emails.

Alert Level 3:

Seniors Minister Tracey Martin notes that:

“The over-70s and other higher-risk groups had the same rights as everyone else, “to go to work, to exercise and to access essential services like supermarkets and banks. It's just that we're asking them to be especially careful”. The government was advising those in this demographic to stay home, where possible, and take additional precautions when leaving home, such as avoiding supermarkets or touching surfaces, according to its [Covid-19 website](#).”

Therefore at Alert Level 3, there will be a continuation of the on-line services and pastoral care as it was at Alert Level 4. However, while some of us will be able to extend our bubbles, the elderly people in our communities may not have anyone to whom they can extend. This will add to their feeling of isolation that will not be helpful for either their mental or physical health. There will be a need for parishes to take the opportunity for more one-on-one face to face contact with the elderly people at this time (within prescribed social distancing). Things that could take place are:

- Hand delivering the church news or worship material to read
- Taking some food that can be correctly handed over
- Offer to do shopping
- A 2m separation door-step conversation
- Where possible use of technology (e.g. Skype and Zoom) for making face to face contact.

Alert Level 2: Physical distancing of one metre outside home will be allowed. People will be asked to stay at home where possible. People at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled, and elderly people) are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home. Churches may be open providing guidelines set out above are followed.

At this level elderly people who are well enough will be able to attend churches that are open. However, there will be need to provide worship and pastoral care for those who are not well enough to come to church or who are still concerned about the risk of doing so.

It will be necessary then to provide for those two situations; those who can and those who can't come to church.

For those who can come to church (assuming churches are open) there will be the need for a 1m physical distancing as well as the need to follow all of the other rules about physical contact and catering that will be in place. As for people of all ages, consistent use of hand sanitizer encouraged and the regular cleaning of all public surfaces such as door handles and tables should be done.

There will be a need to ensure that the elderly people in our congregations are made to feel welcome as the period of isolation will have been felt. Whilst they should be aware to the risk of being with others, they should not be prohibited from attending church.

For those who choose to stay at home, and that may be the majority, then the support that was offered at Alert Level 3 can be continued to be offered with the addition of:

- In home visits with 1m social distancing
- Where appropriate having someone set up in the home of the elderly person, a means by which they can join in the on-line worship.

Alert Level 1: The rules for Alert Level 1 are subject to change but as they stand at the moment at Alert Level 1 COVID-19 is uncontrolled overseas and there would be isolated household transmission could be occurring in New Zealand. Churches would be open as there would be no restrictions on gatherings. However, people would be required to stay home if they are sick and report flu-like symptoms.

Again the elderly people in our communities may either feel able to come to church or are still feeling vulnerable and will want to continue to isolate themselves. Ideally church should still provide the same support as at the other levels and in addition:

- Offer to provide home visits.
- Ensure the person has adequate access to shopping and medical centres etc.
- Encourage small group meetings where it is more likely people can maintain physical distance

Administration:

Each parish should ensure someone suitable co-ordinates these activities at a parish level. Consideration should be given to caring, not only for the elderly people in the congregation but also those in the wider community. At Alert Level 3:

- Letter box or email contact should take place advising people that should they need help that they can contact the parish
- If this has not been done already, a register of the elderly members of the congregation should be drawn up noting whether or not they are able to be contacted via email / internet.
- A list of volunteers should be drawn up who will carry out the activities at Alert Level 2 and 1.

- Protective masks and hand sanitiser should be obtained for use by the volunteers

Communication:

It will be necessary at each of the Alert Levels for clear communication to be in place between the volunteers and those who they will be visiting. Additionally it will be encouraging if parishes advise the Diocesan Office as to what activities they are under taking so that ideas can be shared.

