



Diocese of Christchurch

10 LOGISTICS DRIVE, HAREWOOD
PO BOX 4438, CHRISTCHURCH 8140

26 October 2021

HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19

DELTA ALERT LEVEL 2 (limit 100)

KEY POINTS

- **Follow Government guidelines and regulations**
- **Limit of 100 (plus staff) for indoor and outdoor faith-gatherings**
- **Contact tracing recording via app or written record must take place**
- **Wearing masks highly recommended**
- **Appropriate physical distancing between people in our churches/halls/outdoor events**
- **Singing permitted**
- **Food and drink after services permitted**
- **Communion to be in one kind only (bread)**

INTRODUCTION

The Anglican Diocese of Christchurch is committed to complying with all regulations surrounding the pandemic Alert Levels. Beyond that, Jesus Christ taught that we are to love one another as he loves us and that call on our lives extends to how we treat one another in this pandemic so that ministers, staff, parishioners, worshippers and external users of our church and hall premises are kept as safe as possible.

Delta Level 2 regulations mandated by the Government are challenging for churches but they do not make gathering for worship, for fellowship, for study and for events impossible.

The question these Guidelines seek to answer is, “How do we gather safely?”

These Guidelines support compliance with Government regulations. Where those regulations permit choices, we ask that decisions are made that enable a constructive, practical, confidence building answer to the question, “How do we gather safely?”

These guidelines are issued by the Bishop of Christchurch, Peter Carrell, after consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, Diocesan Youth and Children Ministry Developers, and other Bishops/Dioceses.

At the time of issuing, as we head to a new “traffic lights” system, possibly at the beginning of December 2021, and seek to get to 90%+ double vaccination (unlikely to be reached before late November), the estimation is that there revised Level 2 guidelines will apply through the remainder of October and at least through all November 2021.

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

Let's think about whether what we are doing would constrain an outbreak of Delta – remembering that where Delta is not present in our community, it may arrive, and we will only know that after someone has been infected.

For convenience: we request that any questions you have regarding the Guidelines are worked through in the first instance with your Archdeacon.

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 to be compliant with these Guidelines and with NZ Government guidelines.

Chaplains are asked to adapt the Guidelines appropriately to the context of your respective ministry units. We acknowledge that schools, hospitals, prisons and military camps may have variations from these Guidelines in Government Guidelines issued to them.

The Guidelines work from:

- the general Government regulations concerning Delta Alert Level 2 (<https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/alert-level-2/>) and
- specific Guidelines concerning Funerals, Weddings, Tangihanga (<https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/weddings-and-civil-unions/#weddings-and-civil-unions-at-alert-level-2>, and <https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/funerals-tangihanga-and-last-rites/#funerals-and-tangihanga-at-alert-level-2>), and
- specific Guidelines concerning churches (<https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/worship-and-faith-based-gatherings/#weddings-and-civil-unions-at-alert-level-2>)
- Detailed Public Health Orders found here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/legislation-and-key-documents/#covid-19-public-health-response-act-orders-and-notices>

Vaccination

It is recommended that every person involved in services and other activities in the Diocese of Christchurch is vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus.

At the time of issuing these revised Guidelines it is clear that the Government, under the new “traffic lights” system, will offer churches the option of release from the “100 limit” if all attendees/participants at a service or event are double vaccinated.

This anticipation supports the recommendation above about getting vaccinated.

At the time of issuing these revised Guidelines, no decisions have been made in the Diocese of Christchurch with respect to mandating vaccination; rather we are in a period in which we seek to (1) attend to what the Government revealing re its regulatory intentions, and (2) reflect on what our response will be.

To give one example of what we are reflecting on: should we offer Diocesan direction where the Government provides for choice or should we leave it to each ministry unit to determine its decision in response to choice.

PRINCIPLES, REGULATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS 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. Our approach to regulations, recommendations and guidance should be “How can we be safe when together?” and not “What can we get away with?”
3. When we gather we do so safely through following:
 - a. **Mandatory regulations – issued by the Government**
 - i. **maximum numbers (100 indoors, 100 outdoors) plus clergy/lay staff leaders**
 - ii. **record keeping/contact tracing,**
 - b. **Recommendations – issued here, in the light of Government regulations covering a variety of public events**
 - i. **Appropriate physical distancing between each other,**
 - ii. **Wearing masks,**
 - iii. **Cleanliness of our hands through washing, and**
 - iv. **Regular cleaning of our premises.**
4. The guidance here applies **to members of churches, clubs and societies which use our premises.**
 - a. Compliance is a requirement of acceptance of any booking of premises.
 - b. The only variations to compliance by external users of our premises are where the external user is following national guidelines for their specific activity (e.g. a sporting activity).
5. Nothing herein is intended to contradict the guidelines and directions of the NZ Government.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Thank you for the management plans requested when the Delta Level 2 limit for indoor gatherings was 50 people. Apart from revising your plans in respect of that limit **there is no requirement for you to resubmit your management plans to the Diocesan office.**

GUIDANCE

Public Access

- Churches, halls, church offices will be open to the public in the usual way.
- QR codes must be displayed prominently and must be easy to photograph. In the event someone does not have a/their phone, manual contact tracing documents must be used.
- All persons entering church premises (church, hall, office) 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 with this document.**
- Hand sanitizer must be available for each person entering the venue.

Church Services – General Guidance

The maximum of 100 plus staff for a religious gathering applies to ordinary services, funerals, memorial services, weddings and baptisms.

- **Recommended: all people, congregants, staff, volunteers, visitors and clergy wear a mask covering their mouth and nose at all times, unless speaking (e.g. preaching, reading Scripture).** We recommend disposable masks be available at the place of entry.
- **Presiders at communion must wear a mask** while preparing the elements, leading the Great Thanksgiving prayer and then when distributing communion. (This requirement applies to anyone assisting with preparation/distribution of communion).
- **Food and drink: serving food and drink is permitted.**
 - **All relevant Government guidelines for the serving of food and drink should be followed.**
- Congregants must be signed in for the purposes of “contact tracing” via the app or paper record.
 - **Records of people attending an event should be kept for 60 days and then disposed.**
- 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 locally advertise the availability of these services: <https://anglicanlife.org.nz/news-and-announcements/virtual-services-in-the-diocese/>
- Each ministry unit is asked to manage their regular rota of worship services to provide opportunity to worship within the constraints of maximum numbers.
 - Such management could include a “booking” system to ensure no one comes to church who has to be turned away.
- Some of our church/hall complexes permit physically distanced simultaneous gatherings of two congregations of 100 persons on the same property and this option may be used if all other guidelines are followed.
- Great care should be taken with respect to sharing microphones or lecterns.
- No ministry unit or minister is to take on an unbearable workload.
- The constraints and burdens of Delta Level 2 may be an opportunity to work collaboratively with neighbouring ministry units.
- Prayer books and hymn books are not to be used (since they cannot be readily cleansed after being handled).
- Churches/halls 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 normally to be dropped into stationary receptacles.
- Votive Candle stands: these are places where people could gather, and so should be carefully regulated during Level 2, so that physical distancing can be maintained.

Church Services – Singing

- **Recommended: that people are masked and thus singing occurs where the congregation is masked.**
- When singing is planned to take place, it is fair that in advertising for a service and just before the beginning of a service, it is announced that “This service involves singing” and thus opportunity is given for people to choose to not come to the service or to leave the service because they feel unsafe in a singing service.

- A relevant question to ask in respect of singing in church is “What will give the congregation confidence to return to church?”
- For those interested in the question of choirs and singing groups, here is a short video with Professor Michael Baker talking with the NZ Choral Federation on this issue [Prof Michael Baker on Choirs & Covid-19 - YouTube](#). The advice in it is that choirs could gather to rehearse in a well-ventilated place, wearing masks, and physically distanced, but should not sing with an audience.

Church Services – Holy Communion

- **Communion will be of one kind only (i.e. bread only).** This is a mandatory requirement directed by Bishop Peter and is consistent with Delta Level 2 practice elsewhere in ACANZP.
- **The presider and any assistant at communion must be masked at all times,** including preparation of the elements before and during the service, the saying of the Great Thanksgiving, and during distribution of communion.
- **Bread will be dropped into the hand in a way that the hand of the distributor does not touch the hand of the receiver.**
- 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 up for communion before the service, setting the Table before/during the service, and clearing the Table. **The recommended maximum is 2 persons (i.e. presider and an assistant).**
- **There should not be an offertory procession as this increases the number of hands touching the vessels used in communion.**
- Worshippers moving forward to receive communion should observe appropriate physical distancing as possible 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: prayer books and hymn books are not to be used by the congregation; words for the congregation should be on an overhead projection screen or on one-time pieces of paper handed to people by one or two (max) designated persons who have thoroughly sanitized their hands and is wearing a face mask.

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Memorial Services

- For Weddings, Funerals, Memorial Services: all above guidance applies.
- Baptisms: these may take place in Level 2, with due caution being exercised.

Parish and Community Groups

- Midweek parish and community groups may meet provided ‘at risk’ people stay at home.
- All such groups meeting on church or hall premises must observe all Guidelines above.
- Groups meeting in private homes must observe Government regulations for social gatherings.
- Mainly Music: please see Guidelines re Children’s Ministry.

Staff

- Staff who are not ‘at risk’ can work from their ministry unit office.
- No pastoral care visits to homes, hospitals or rest homes unless there is a clear invitation to do so from the household or institution concerned.

- Meetings can take place, provided all Government regulations for workplaces are observed.
- Hand hygiene standards continue.

General

- Hand sanitizer must be used and any surfaces used by more than one person must be sanitized.
- Cough and personal hygiene etiquette is to be maintained. Including that if you are unwell, do not attend, and get tested.
- 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: 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 appropriate physical distance (e.g. tape on floor and appropriate signage)
- ensure hand sanitising takes place for everyone on entry into worship space

CAMPS

Camps may go ahead under Level 2 conditions without the direct permission of the Bishop of Christchurch providing:

1. (For youth camps) The Diocesan Youth Developer (or her alternative during her study leave) is aware of the proposed camp and of the maximum number which the proposed camp is open to;
2. The Vicar(s)/Priest(s) in Charge of the ministry unit (or units if more than one involved) are happy with arrangements in respect of numbers, contact tracing, social distancing, mask wearing and serving of food and drink, that is, that such arrangements accord with Government Level 2 regulations.
3. The Bishop is consulted in the event of any uncertainty about arrangements.
4. The organisers of the camp fully understand that either Government regulations or Diocesan Guidelines may change at any time (especially if Covid comes to the South Island) and consequently a camp may need to be cancelled at short notice.

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) Visitor must wear a mask at all times.
- 4) Home Communion (in one kind only) may be given, and consideration given to this being by reserved sacrament. (This both reduces the amount of time the visitor is in the home).
- 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

- **School age Children’s programmes may take place at Delta 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.
- **Pre School Children’s Programmes may take place at Delta Level 2 provided:**
 - There is strict compliance with all standards set by the NZ Government.
 - Parents/caregivers clearly indicate they are comfortable with their child(ren) being involved in the Programme.
- **The following site may be of use in planning programmes:**
 - <https://mailchi.mp/education/early-learning-bulletin-7-september-2021>

MINISTRY INVOLVING YOUTH

ENJOY EVENT – HEAD HOME

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

Youth Ministry in Delta 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.

When we plan for youth events it may be useful to distinguish between:

- youth events held on church premises such as church or hall,
- youth events held outside (at church, at a park, etc), and
- youth events held in people’s homes.

In each kind of event there is a responsibility to comply with NZ Government regulations, to follow recommendations from the Diocese, and generally to ensure the health and safety of every participant.

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

Young People	Youth Group <i>suggest no more than 1.5 hours duration; 100 people max; Masks recommended and contact tracing compulsory</i>	Small Groups <i>Masks recommended and contact tracing compulsory</i>	Mentoring <i>Masks recommended and contact tracing compulsory</i>	Worship Team <i>Practices under 2 hrs Masks recommended and contact tracing compulsory</i>	Camps: see guidelines above	Schools <i>less than 2 hrs in school</i> <i>Group meetings to be no larger than 100 people Masks recommended and contact tracing compulsory</i>
Youth Leadership	Leadership Team Meetings <i>less than 2 hours</i> <i>Group meetings to be no larger than 100 people Masks recommended and contact tracing compulsory</i>	Supervision <i>Masks recommended and tracing compulsory</i>	Training Sessions <i>less than 2 hours</i> <i>Group meetings to be no larger than 100 people Masks recommended and tracing compulsory</i>	Networking <i>Group meetings to be no larger than 100 people Masks recommended and tracing compulsory</i>	Camps: see guidelines above	Office <i>100 people</i> <i>Masks recommended and tracing compulsory</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
- An appropriate separation for door-step conversation
- Where possible use of technology (e.g. Skype and Zoom) for making face to face contact.

Delta Alert Level 2: 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 a 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) they must wear a mask, contract trace and maintain appropriate physical distance 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 using masks and 2m 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 see Govt website. Churches will be open and hopefully 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.