



# **Our Lady of Fatima Church**

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## **COVID-19 SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**7<sup>th</sup> August 2021**  
**Rev\_3**

## Our Lady of Fatima Church COVID-19 SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Revision History

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**Appendices**

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Appendix 1 – not used

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Overview**

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This Safety Management Plan was originally put in place to allow the safe reopening and return to celebrate Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church and to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 following Phase 1 COVID-19 restrictions from 18 May 2020.

The WA Government has implemented a staged lifting of COVID-19 restrictions based on the advice of the WA Chief Health Officer. While there are very few active cases within WA and there have been no local cases of COVID-19 in WA since 1 May 2021, it is still important to maintain COVID-safe principles and sensible safety precautions including good hygiene, additional sanitisation and physical distancing. This will ensure that if new cases do occur, the risk of the transmission of the COVID-19 infection is minimised.

With the introduction of Phase 5 and the further easing of restrictions, it is appropriate for Our Lady of Fatima Parish to revise this COVID-19 Safety Management Plan.

This Safety Management Plan explains how Our Lady of Fatima Parish will take steps to implement the requirements and advice of the Government of West Australia COVID Safety Guidelines in our church.

This document has been revised to manage Phase 5 restrictions effective from 23 June 2021.

### **1.2 Objectives**

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The Safety Management Plan was also put in place with the following objectives:

- Enable parishioners to participate in Mass in a safe and healthy way, following Federal and State Government regulations.
- Ensuring the ongoing good health and safety of our Parishioners and their families; Father Francis, the community in which we are in reach within the Archdiocese of Perth and State of Western Australia.
- Providing connection and community amongst our parish so that our members can feel connected, loved and support.
- Provide a safe place of worship for our parish and community to connect with God.
- Celebrate Holy Mass as a community so that people can fulfil their liturgical and Eucharistic needs.

In order to build these instructions, the following were taken into consideration

- Government regulations; CoVid-19 information
- Information received from the Archdiocese of Perth
- Health and Hygiene matters
- Cleaning requirements
- Social distancing requirements
- Measures to keep Father Francis healthy and safe
- Measures to keep Parishioners participating in Mass inside the Church healthy and safe
- To enable Mass to be ministered and participated in a health and safe way – what would we see; what would we hear; how will you feel?
- What is fair and equitable regarding access to Mass (physical presence) i.e. when capacity limitations are in place
- Acknowledging Mass online is still an option for Parishioners; encourage to partake by this means until Government advice that numbers at gatherings increases.

### **1.3 Safety Planning and Pathway**

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All businesses need to do their part to comply with the Government of Western Australia COVID safety requirements and help mitigate the risks of COVID-19.

COVID Safety Plans are an important part of ensuring that re-opening businesses does not increase the risk of spreading COVID-19. Failure to complete a COVID Safety Plan may mean your business is putting the community at risk. Authorised officers under the Emergency Management Act have the power to close premises and businesses that put the community at risk in this way.

While Phase 5 has lifted many of the remaining restrictions, WA remains in a State of Emergency.

## 2. SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 2.1 About COVID-19

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COVID-19 is spread from person-to-person through close contact and droplets including:

- Direct contact with infected people;
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze; and
- Touching contaminated objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables), and then touching your mouth or face.

The most effective measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus are good hygiene practices, additional sanitisation regimes and social distancing.

As COVID-19 is spread person-to-person through coughing, sneezing, touching contaminated surfaces, and close contact with infected individuals, there is a need for businesses to remain vigilant with cleaning and sanitising regimes and taking extra care with maintaining and promoting hygiene practices throughout business operations.

The most effective measures are good hygiene practices, additional sanitisation regimes, social distancing and keeping away from others if unwell.

*Source: Government of Western Australia COVID Safety Guidelines, Phase 2, Version 1.0 18 May 2020*

### 2.2 Physical and Social Distancing

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Social distancing (also known as physical distancing) is one of the most effective methods of reducing the spread of viruses. The more space between people the harder it is for the virus to spread. If a person in the congregation is found to be positive for COVID-19, the risk of transmission to the rest of the congregation is minimised if the church has been practising social distancing.

Our pews are no longer marked to indicate 1.5m spacing and while not mandatory, parishioners are encouraged to maintain 1.5 metres separation between people who are not from the same household or groups of other patrons where practical.

The following modifications will be made to the Mass service to ensure physical distancing:

- The Sign of Peace is to be given without physical contact. Parishioners are encouraged to bow or wave to each other.

## 2.3 Hygiene

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### Increased cleaning and sanitation regime

It is important to ensure thorough and regular cleaning of common contact surfaces, 'high touch' items and shared amenities, such as pews, handles, taps and toilets.

Persons who feel unwell, who have flu/respiratory symptoms, elevated body temperatures or who have been in contact in the previous fourteen (14) days with persons suspected to have, or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are **not permitted** to enter the church.

Hand sanitiser is available at the entrance to the church and visitors are encouraged to use it prior to entry.

Parishioners are recommended to bring their own hand sanitiser and those who wish to wear masks when attending Mass are encouraged to do so. This has been communicated in the bulletin via post, email and social media on the Parish Facebook page

Holy Water fonts/stoups are to remain empty.

The Sign of Peace is to be given without physical contact. Parishioners are encouraged to bow or wave to each other.

### Holy Communion

Holy Communion will be administered in a modified way aiming to preserve the sacredness of the Eucharist while maintaining physical distancing and hygiene standards. It is anticipated that the distribution of Holy Communion will be reviewed regularly and may change service to service based on learnings and feedback from Parishioners. Directions on how Holy Communion is to be administered will be communicated during the service.

The distribution of Holy Communion will be done in line with the following guidelines:

- In view of the now long-standing practice of receiving Holy Communion in the hand, all Catholics receiving Holy Communion at Masses celebrated in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite are very strongly encouraged, out of concern for the health of others including the celebrant and other ministers, to refrain from receiving Holy Communion on the tongue until the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has passed.
- The Precious Blood is not to be shared from the chalice at any Masses and is reserved to the celebrant only. The celebrant and concelebrants are to receive from the chalice by intinction.
- The celebrants and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to wash their hands in soap and water, or are to use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser both immediately before and immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion.

- All sacred vessels are to be thoroughly washed before and after each Mass.

## 2.4 Training and Communication

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There is a small team of volunteers to help manage the controls put in place for the COVID-19 Safety Management Plan.

Every member of the team has contributed to developing this plan, and, therefore, is familiar with it.

The Parish Pastoral Council Team aims to regularly communicate restrictions, policies and procedures via hard copy notices around the venue, distributing the bulletin by post and email, through social media and via briefings before and during Masses.

This Safety Management Plan document is our primary document that will be used to ensure all volunteers helping to manage Masses and other services clearly understand the controls in place to keep everyone safe from COVID-19. This document will be reviewed and revised regularly.

## 2.5 Response Planning

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The following measures are important to minimise further risk and assist in managing the public health response if someone with possible COVID-19 infection enters the church. All public health advice and instructions must be followed in the event of a confirmed case.

### **Maintain attendance records**

It is a requirement for businesses to maintain attendance records of patrons. This will assist Public Health with contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case at our church.

The name and contact details of every person who enters the church for any reason is to be recorded for contact tracing. **No record** is to be made of the reason why the person has attended the church. Records of the attendance register will be retained by the Parish office.

Parishioners are encouraged to use the WA Government's SafeWA app to check in upon entry. The church's QR code is clearly displayed on the door and in the foyer of the church.

### **Responding to a COVID-19 incident**

If you are aware that someone with a case of COVID-19 has been in the church, ring the COVID-19 Public Hotline 24/7 on 1800 020 080 and follow the advice of health officials.

If someone is confirmed as having COVID-19 or is getting tested for COVID-19, they should already be at home. However, there may be circumstances where a person in the church is displaying COVID-like symptoms or shares information (e.g. they have been in close contact



with someone that has the virus) that causes you to have reasonable concerns about their health and the health of others in the church.

The person could be staff, a volunteer, parishioner or other visitor to your premises. Where this occurs:

### **1. Keep others away from the person**

If the person has serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, call 000 for urgent medical help. Otherwise, you must take steps to prevent the person from potentially spreading the virus by keeping others away from the person. The measures must be reasonable.

### **2. Seek advice and assess the risks**

To determine if it is reasonable to suspect the person may have COVID-19, talk to the person about your concerns and seek government health advice by ringing the COVID-19 Public Hotline 24/7 on 1800 020 080.

### **3. Transport**

Ensure the person has safe transport home, to a location they can isolate, or to a medical facility if necessary.

### **4. Clean and disinfect**

All public health advice is to be followed about closing off affected areas and prevent access until they have been cleaned and disinfected. Open outside doors and windows if possible to increase air flow.

The Church will be cleared and re-fumigated or disinfected by some other method.

### **5. Assisting public health to identify close contacts**

Notify the state public health unit by contacting the COVID-19 Public Hotline 24/7 on 1800 020 080. The state public health unit may ask for attendance records to identify close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case so that they can contact them and provide them with instructions, for example, in relation to quarantine requirements. Public health officers have a range of powers to require us to provide information including personal information. In the meantime, for the purposes of undertaking a workplace risk assessment and to assist the WA public health unit, consider who the affected person may have had recent close contact with.

The Perth Catholic Archdiocese should also be notified of this development.

### **Review risk assessment**

If there is concern about the risk of anyone being exposed to the virus at the church, a risk assessment should be carried out with reference to the latest information available. The Parish

Council is responsible for developing prevention and control strategies appropriate to the church, and ensure that all people hosting and organising services at the church are aware of and follow these strategies, as laid out in this document.

The Parish Council will regularly review this COVID-19 Safety Management Plan, and assess and decide whether any changes or additional control measures are required.

### **3. FORMAT AND PREPARATION FOR MASS**

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This section previously captured the detailed actions required and planned steps to be followed to celebrate Mass at Our Lady of Fatima church in accordance with the guidelines set out in section 2 of previous versions of this Safety Management Plan.

In Phase 5 the following are captured as reminders of the main controls that remain in place.

#### **3.1 Pre-Mass Preparation**

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- Government Register and SafeWA QR codes set-up in the foyer for recording of each Parishioner's name on entry.
- 2 large hand sanitizers in the foyer.
- Parishioners are advised to not attend Mass if they feel unwell, have a temperature, or have flu/like symptoms.
- Parishioners are recommended to bring their own hand sanitizer, and wear a Mask (if they wish).

#### **3.2 During Mass**

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- While not mandatory, parishioners are encouraged to maintain 1.5 metres separation between people who are not from the same household or groups of other patrons where practical.
- At the 'Sign of Peace' – parishioners are can bow or wave to each other.

#### **3.3 After Mass**

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- Please observe social distancing requirements where practical. Father may or may not be available for interactions.

#### **3.4 Cleaning of the Church**

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- Cleaning conducted at regular intervals.
- Cleaning materials as per WorkSafe website recommend – detergents with warm water; or detergents such as Pine O Clean that cleans and disinfects (Hospital Grade Disinfection).

## 4. PARISH HALL

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COVID Safety Plans are an important part of ensuring that re-opening businesses does not increase the risk of spreading COVID-19.

The following plans are in place to comply with the Government of Western Australia COVID safety requirements and help mitigate the risks of COVID-19 for persons utilising the Parish Hall.

At the time of booking, persons who intend to utilise the Parish Hall will be informed of these requirements.

While not mandatory, patrons utilising the Parish Hall are encouraged to maintain 1.5 metres separation between people who are not from the same household or groups of other patrons where practical.

Hand sanitiser will be kept near the entrance to the hall and all visitors to the hall are encouraged to use it on entry.

Attendance records are to be kept for every person entering the hall for the purpose of contact tracing.

It is the responsibility of the person booking the hall to ensure:

- Contact details are collected for every person attending their group session,
- Cleaning and sanitising appropriate to their activity type is completed at the end of the session.

If a person with a suspected case of COVID-19 attends the Parish Hall response actions will be in accordance with the Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church COVID-19 Safety Management Plan Response Planning section 2.5. In addition the Parish Hall Coordinator with whom the booking was made, and Fr Francis must be informed of the suspected case.

A full copy of the Our Lady of Fatima Church COVID-19 Safety Management Plan will be kept in the Parish hall for reference.

## 5. KEY CONTACTS

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- 13COVID: For information about coronavirus measures and restrictions, and what they mean for you.
- COVID-19 Public Hotline 24/7: 1800 020 080: If you suspect you, a staff member, or a customer may have COVID-19 coronavirus symptoms or may have had close contact with a person who has COVID-19 coronavirus.
- Dedicated Police Number: 131 444

## 6. FURTHER INFORMATION

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- Coronavirus - public information: [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus)
- COVID-19 industry information: [www.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.health.wa.gov.au)
- Resources on social distancing:  
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-your-distance>  
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/coronavirus-video-social-distancing>
- Occupational safety and health information is available on the WorkSafe website [www.dmir.wa.gov.au](http://www.dmir.wa.gov.au)

## 7. REFERENCES

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Government of Western Australia COVID Safety Guidelines, Phase 2, Version 1.0 18 May 2020  
- <https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/COVID-Safety-Guidelines.pdf>

Government of Western Australia COVID Safety Guidelines, Phase 3, Version 1.0 6 June 2020  
- <https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/COVID%20Safety%20Guidelines%20Phase%203-Generic.pdf>

Directives for Churches and Chapels within the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth Phase 2 of Western Australia's COVID Roadmap from The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB Archbishop of Perth - [http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Our\\_Archdiocese-Archbishop-Latest\\_News-2020-COVID19\\_Update\\_New\\_Directives\\_for\\_Churches\\_and\\_Chapels\\_Ref\\_20206.htm](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Our_Archdiocese-Archbishop-Latest_News-2020-COVID19_Update_New_Directives_for_Churches_and_Chapels_Ref_20206.htm)

Directives for Churches and Chapels within the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth Phase 3 of Western Australia's COVID-19 Roadmap from The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB Archbishop of Perth –  
[http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Our\\_Archdiocese-Archbishop-Latest\\_News-2020-COVID19\\_Update\\_New\\_Directives\\_for\\_Churches\\_and\\_Chapels\\_Ref\\_20207.htm](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Our_Archdiocese-Archbishop-Latest_News-2020-COVID19_Update_New_Directives_for_Churches_and_Chapels_Ref_20207.htm)

Appendix 1: Not Used

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