

COVID-19 PROTECTION FRAMEWORK GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY AND WORSHIP

In October 2021 the New Zealand Government Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa introduced the COVID-19 Protection Framework, also known as the 'traffic light system'. This replaces the alert level system that has been in place since early 2020. In consultation with ministry units, the Diocesan Council have formed a diocesan COVID-19 Protection Policy. This policy aligns with the government framework with an emphasis on vaccinations as a key method of protection.

It is important that the guidelines in this document be read in the context of both government direction and diocesan policy:

[Official Government 'traffic light system'](#) and [Guidelines for Places of Worship](#)

[Diocesan COVID-19 Protection Policy \(on diocesan website\)](#)




Clause 6.5a of the diocesan policy states that *Bishop's Office and Diocesan Office management will be tasked with providing guidelines and resources to ministry units*. These guidelines are provided for that purpose. They are designed to provide specific advice with regards to the worship and operational life of the Ministry Unit. It is important to note that these guidelines will be updated in response to changes in Government policy.

Gathering or Event?

The government framework distinguished between a Gathering and an Event.

- **Gathering** is defined as 'a group of people who are intermingling'. Services and the majority of church activities are examples of gatherings.
- **Event** is defined as an activity organised by a business or service
 - that takes place at a commercial or private indoor or outdoor premises or a publicly owned premises hired for that purpose;
 - that has controlled access of customers or clients via ticketing, fee paying on premises, registration, or other practicable means of controllable entry;
 - unless that activity is an outdoor community event or a gathering. Ticketed concerts held at places of worship are an example of an event.

Diocesan Dispensation Process

People will be familiar with the  and  approach of previous charts. In addition, some services and activities are marked  **With Dispensation**. This refers to instances where ministry units will need to have an dispensation in accordance with the diocesan policy for that gathering or event to take place. Information on the dispensation process can be found at:

[Diocesan Dispensation Form \(on diocesan website\)](#)

Children

At this time, people under the age of 12 years and 3 months are not required to show proof of vaccination. They are able to attend gatherings where My Vaccine Passes are being used.

Leaders and Limits

Capacity limits do not include clergy, workers, and volunteers, but do include all other people (including children).

Vaccination Mandates and Risk Assessments

Unless covered by a government health order, in order to require workers (clergy, staff and volunteers) to be vaccinated, a risk assessment must be conducted on the role they perform. Refer to the Diocesan COVID-19 Protection Policy for further details.

- A risk assessment has been conducted on the role of clergy. The outcome of this is that all clergy must be vaccinated.
- In line with Government health order, where staff and volunteers are present at gatherings where My Vaccine Passes are being used, they too must be vaccinated. In these cases, you do not need to conduct a risk assessment.
- Where ministry units believe a vaccine mandate is needed for roles in other activities/ministries (other than gatherings and events using My Vaccine Pass), risk assessments will need to be conducted: e.g. children's workers and lay pastoral visitors.

[Risk Assessment Form \(on diocesan website\)](#)

Safety Plans

A safety plan is a method of assessing, documenting, implementing, and managing health and safety measures to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other health and safety hazards for the users of or attendees of all our activities. These plans also consider the restrictions and limitations in place.

Ministry units can use their own, or a template and example is provided on the diocesan website (*see below*).

Further Support and Advice

There a number of resources available to assist you in your planning and decision making. These are available on the diocesan website:

[Diocesan Website – Health and Safety Page](#)

Here you will find:

- **Information for Ministry Units** outlining more detail on the items covered in the diocesan policy and this guidance.
- **Dispensation Process and Form**
- **Risk Assessment for Lay Workers and Volunteers**
- **Safety Plan Template** and example
- A guide to **Using My Vaccine Pass**

Further support and advice is also available through cluster and regional meetings or by making direct contact with your Archdeacon or the Diocesan Office.



RED

- Action needed to protect the health system
- Action needed to protect at-risk populations

My Vaccine Passes Used

My Vaccine Passes
NOT Used

All Activities (Indoors and Outdoors)

Gathering Limits	100 people	25 people
Physical Distancing	1 metre	1 metre
Face Coverings	Encouraged Everywhere	Encouraged Everywhere
Record Keeping / QR Scanning	✓	✓
My Vaccine Passes Checked	✓	✗
Vaccine Mandate – Clergy	✓	✓
Safety Plan Conducted	✓	✓
Online	✓	✓

• Gatherings

Gatherings (including worship and services)	✓	! With Dispensation
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	✓	Based on Risk Assessment
Communion	One Kind	✓
	Full Communion	✗
Singing / Choirs	✓	✗
Sharing the Peace	✗	✗
Baptism (and other close contact ministry)	✓	! With Dispensation
Funerals and Weddings	✓	! With Dispensation
Hospitality	✓	✓
Pastoral Visits	✓	✓
Groups and Programmes	✓	! With Dispensation

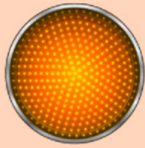
• Events

Events	✓	✗
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	✓	n/a
Hospitality	✓ <i>(must be seated and separated)</i>	n/a

• Workplaces (other than Gatherings/Events)

Access to Workplaces	Based on Government Mandate or Safety Plan
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	Based on Risk Assessment
Church Offices / Workplaces Governing Body Staff / Leadership Teams	Working from home / online meetings may be appropriate in some cases.
Op shops / Local Food Banks etc	Treat as 'retail' within government framework. Open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing

REMEMBER! STAY HOME IF YOU'RE SICK & PRACTISE GOOD HYGIENE



ORANGE

- Increasing community transmission
- Whole of health system is focusing resources but can manage
- Increasing risk to at-risk populations

My Vaccine Passes Used	My Vaccine Passes NOT Used
------------------------	----------------------------

All Activities (Indoors and Outdoors)

	No Limits	50 people
Gathering Limits	No Limits	50 people
Physical Distancing	No Limits	1 metre
Face Coverings	Encouraged Everywhere	Encouraged Everywhere
Record Keeping / QR Scanning	✓	✓
My Vaccine Passes Checked	✓	✗
Vaccine Mandate – Clergy	✓	✓
Safety Plan Conducted	✓	✓
Online	✓	✓

• Gatherings

Gatherings (including worship and services)	✓	! With Dispensation
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	✓	Based on Risk Assessment
Communion	One Kind	✓
	Full Communion	✗
Singing / Choirs	✓	✓
Sharing the Peace	✓	✗
Baptism (and other close contact ministry)	✓	! With Dispensation
Funerals and Weddings	✓	! With Dispensation
Hospitality	✓	✓
Pastoral Visits	✓	✓
Groups and Programmes	✓	! With Dispensation

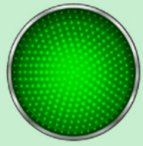
• Events

Events	✓	✗
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	✓	n/a
Hospitality	✓	n/a

• Workplaces (other than Gatherings/Events)

Access to Workplaces	Based on Government Mandate or Safety Plan
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	Based on Risk Assessment
Church Offices / Workplaces Governing Body Staff / Leadership Teams	Workplaces can be open. Risk assessment and safety plans in place.
Op shops / Local Food Banks etc	Treat as 'retail' within government framework. Open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing

REMEMBER! STAY HOME IF YOU'RE SICK & PRACTISE GOOD HYGIENE



GREEN

- Limited community transmission
- COVID-19 hospitalisations are at a manageable level
- Whole of health system is ready to respond

My Vaccine Passes Used	My Vaccine Passes NOT Used
------------------------	----------------------------

All Activities (Indoors and Outdoors)

	No Limits	100 people
Gathering Limits	No Limits	100 people
Physical Distancing	No Limits	1 metre
Face Coverings	Optional	Optional
Record Keeping / QR Scanning	✓	✓
My Vaccine Passes Checked	✓	✗
Vaccine Mandate – Clergy	✓	✓
Safety Plan Conducted	✓	✓
Online	✓	✓

• Gatherings

Gatherings (including worship and services)	✓	! With Dispensation
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	✓	Based on Risk Assessment
Communion	One Kind	✓
	Full Communion	✓
Singing / Choirs	✓	✓
Sharing the Peace	✓	✓
Baptism (and other close contact ministry)	✓	! With Dispensation
Funerals and Weddings	✓	! With Dispensation
Hospitality	✓	✓
Pastoral Visits	✓	✓
Groups and Programmes	✓	! With Dispensation

• Events

Events	✓	! With Dispensation
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	✓	Based on Risk Assessment
Hospitality	✓	✓ (must be seated and separated)

• Workplaces (other than Gatherings/Events)

Access to Workplaces	Based on Government Mandate or Safety Plan
Vaccine Mandate – Staff and Volunteers	Based on Risk Assessment
Church Offices / Workplaces Governing Body Staff / Leadership Teams	Workplaces can be open. Risk assessment and safety plans in place.
Op shops / Local Food Banks etc	Treat as 'retail' within government framework. Retail is open.

REMEMBER! STAY HOME IF YOU'RE SICK & PRACTISE GOOD HYGIENE