

HOLY TRINITY AND SACRED HEART
COVID 19 ROUTE MAP STEP 3 - MAY 17 2021

1) INTRODUCTION

Following the successful on-going vaccination programme, the government has decided that certain relaxations of Covid restrictions can be made. And the **Bishops' Conference** has endorsed them accordingly.

We are being asked to take more individual responsibility for our (and each other's) safety. This however comes with a very serious caveat – that the general principles for creating a safe environment are not abandoned!

There is still a very dangerous virus out there, including its variants. **So the risks will continue to be measured locally and new procedures either put in place or existing ones allowed to remain.**

2) CONTINUING PROCEDURES

Until, therefore, we are certain that all of us are beyond risk it is recommended that six key measures to help reduce aerosol and droplet spread remain in place for now:

- ❖ **Use of NHS Track and Trace login or our own register.**
- ❖ **Hand sanitiser will continue to be used**
- ❖ **Masks will continue to be worn**
- ❖ **Distancing of “1 metre plus a mask” will be maintained**
- ❖ **Maintaining of adequate ventilation**
- ❖ **No congregational singing**

Because of these measures, and because we shall concentrate on reducing aerosol/droplet exposure, the intense cleaning regime may be relaxed, with the church being given a “good” clean weekly; and only touch points being cleaned after each service. **However, if there is an increase in local covid cases, this policy will be reviewed.**

3) CAPACITY

We are already working at about 50% of our normal church capacity, making allowance for family groups and “bubbles” and this will continue. Thus we have safe seating for about 120. Certain celebrations, however, will have attendances determined by the government:

- ❖ **Funerals** – limited to the capacity of the church, ie 120 as above
- ❖ **Baptisms**
 - ❖ If during Mass, then capacity of church. ie 120 as above
 - ❖ If stand-alone celebration, 30 limit
- ❖ **Marriages** – numbers limited to 30

4) STEWARDS

Following on from the above, the stewarding numbers may be relaxed, with only one for daily masses but still keeping three at each of our Sunday Masses, where there may be a risk of oversubscription. Stewards may also still be required for funerals.

So while it is no longer necessary to have stewards for the Church to be open for public worship or private prayer, their role remains very useful and valuable, especially as more and more people are returning to Church.

The emphasis now moves towards our stewards being *Welcomers*. I feel sure that our stewards are willing to continue to do the following which has been so important within our parish:

- ❖ being a welcoming face/ voice at the door when people arrive, ready to answer questions when asked
- ❖ handing out (or directing people to) newsletters and mass sheets

- ❖ providing guidance to anyone who is unsure of procedures recommended (such as for track and trace)
- ❖ wiping down frequent touch points and a more general wipe down after the last mass of the day
- ❖ providing advice and encouragement on covid-safe measures, but only if requested or clearly necessary - this includes wearing of face masks, one way system, coming forward for communion etc
- ❖ more direct stewarding, if needed, because of larger numbers, funerals etc

5) CHANGES WE CAN NOW MAKE IMMEDIATELY

HOLY COMMUNION

- ❖ We are now able to revert to receiving Holy Communion at the appointed liturgical time rather than at the end of Mass. This means that you will be able to return to your places for private prayer before the closing blessing and dismissal. **But please note:**
 - ❖ The tables will still be used
 - ❖ Orderly lines must be formed, alternately left and right, as now and stewarded
 - ❖ Return to your places using the side aisles (if your bench is 'blocked', please use the one behind).
 - ❖ Worshippers in the side aisles will follow the centre aisles, from the back
 - ❖ Although communion in the hand is the preferred norm, communion on the tongue is now allowed; but those so wishing must come to the priest at the end of the 'normal' communion as the celebrant **must** sanitise his hands between each communicant.

6) OFFERTORY PROCESSION

- ❖ We are now able to re-instate the offertory procession, provided the two volunteers so doing are from the same 'bubble' and hands are sanitised.
- ❖ Our stewards will organise this as they did before.

7) VOTIVE CANDLES

- ❖ **It will once more be possible to light votive candles in front of our Lady Altar; but please observe the following guidelines:**
 - ❖ **Place your money in the slots provided**
 - ❖ **Light your candle from one already lit and place on the stand**
 - ❖ **Do not handle candles unnecessarily**
 - ❖ **Do not congregate around the altar mixing with others**

8) GDPR

We have been advised by the Archdiocese to review our guidelines with respect to GDPR and our live streaming. Our worshippers should not have their privacy compromised while in the Church.

For the most part our congregation is not recognisable on the live stream, save for the back of their heads, and only then during the distribution of Holy Communion.

However, if you feel uncomfortable being visible or recognisable on the stream, please advise Father Michael accordingly and we can ensure that you receive communion outside the scope of the camera.

This is especially true of our children; so if parents or guardians feel the same please speak to Father Michael.

9) BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

We had an inspection on Wednesday from Birmingham City Council, who are charged with reviewing our Covid 19 procedures and processes.

You will be delighted to hear that the parish passed its inspection with 'flying colours'; and so hopefully you will feel even safer!