

Covid-19 Safe management plan

V29, 31 December, 2021

Our priorities as a church have been unchanged through this crisis:

- To **honour God** in all we do, seeking to grow Christians spiritually, and continue to share the gospel of hope and joy.
- To **continue ministry**, but in necessarily new and adaptive forms. Our priority is faithful preaching of God's Word.
- We recognize that **fellowship and unity** are important, but to be nurtured in safe ways.
- The Bible instructs Christians to **gather** together as a church. Ideally, this is in person.

This Covid-19 Management Plan forms the policy by which our church will operate our activities during the Covid period. The plan is updated regularly, as per government directives, and all members (especially leaders and coordinators of events) must comply with these rules.

WSCCC has been registered with the NSW Government as a Covid Safe Organisation.

The current status

The Omicron variant of Covid has spread widely throughout our community in Sydney, and inevitably will affect members of our church. It appears that this variant is more infectious, but the illness less severe. Evidence suggests that people are protected by a booster (3rd dose) vaccination when eligible.

As a church, we continue to be guided by NSW Health guidelines and regulations. As a general rule, we:

- Encourage vaccination of all attendees.
- Ask affected people to isolate (as per below).
- Attention to good hygiene and risk minimisation.
- Respond seriously to potential exposures.

Under the NSW Health guidelines and this WSCCC Covid policy, we believe it is safe for people to attend services and ministries in our church on site.

Church services

Our Sunday services have resumed on-site worship at their regular times and locations (the 8:45am Strathfield Cantonese service, resumes in January 2022).

We encourage all to return to gather for church services on site, as Christians gathering is what God commends. However, understandably some people are not ready to return. Therefore some congregations will still offer on-line services in various forms:

Service	Location	Ongoing online services
Cantonese 10:30am	Strathfield	YouTube livestream

Cantonese 8:45am (from late January 2022)	Strathfield	Shared with 10:30am service
Mandarin 10:00am	Croydon Park	YouTube recording
Mandarin 10:30am	Strathfield	Zoom service
English 9am	Strathfield	YouTube livestream
English 4:30pm	Strathfield	Shared with 9am service
English 10am	Croydon Park	Sermon recordings on website

The decision whether to move services back to online-only arrangements will be considered by each congregation's pastors and deacons. This is guided by government guidelines and congregational concerns. However we will not be moving services onsite/online back and forward unpredictably (after each positive case), rather a longer term arrangement (of months) will be determined and announced.

Covid-positive people and contacts

As per the government's guidelines, we ask for the following measures regarding isolation. The key action is to be tested (PCR or RAT) if you are feeling symptoms. **Please do not attend church if you have any cold and flu symptoms.**

If you test positive to Covid:

- You are required to isolate (at home, or if severe, in hospital) for 7 days.
- Do a RAT (rapid antigen test) on day 6, and if negative, you are cleared after the 7th day.
- **Please inform your pastor or deacon at church.**

Close contacts:

- **You are a close contact if you live in the same house as a Covid-positive person, or spend 4 hours or more with them in their home. Church activities on site are not considered close contacts.**
- **You must isolate for 7 days from the time of exposure.**
- If you become symptomatic, you must get a PCR test.
- Do a RAT (rapid antigen test) on day 6 (whether you have symptoms or not), and if negative, you are cleared after the 7th day.

Casual contacts:

- Casual contact happens in any activity – shopping, restaurants, transport, and church.
- If you have contact with a positive person (for less than 4 hours in their home), you simply need to monitor symptoms.
- You do not need to isolate.
- You do not need to be tested unless you are symptomatic.

QR code registration

All people visiting the church site must still register with the QR code scan. Temperature checks are not required.

Vaccination

All people are allowed and welcome to join us on-site for church services, regardless of vaccination status. Vaccination status will not be requested at church. Nevertheless, we encourage all to be fully vaccinated, and obtain booster shots when due.

However, leaders of activities at WSCCC hold a special responsibility for the welfare of our attendees. During this pandemic, we must act in the interests of others, and minimise any chance of exposing our attendees to Covid. Therefore, all people serving in ministry should be fully vaccinated before re-commencing activities which involve face to face interaction. It is particularly important that children and visitors can join us confidently knowing that our leaders have been vaccinated. This is a loving and considerate gesture to the vulnerable.

Full vaccination is therefore required for safe ministry in our church in the following roles: pastors and staff, deacons, service leaders, Bible study leaders, Sunday school teachers and helpers, music team and choirs, welcoming teams, food preparation and any other church activities which involve leading and serving in face-to-face capacities.

Hygiene measures

People at risk

Symptomatic people should not attend church, out of consideration for others. They are encouraged to obtain a Covid swab, and when cleared, return to church. The symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat, loss of smell/taste, or flu-like lethargy.

Singing

Congregational singing is allowed, and we ask that congregation members wear masks whilst singing.

Masks

Although the government does not require masks to be worn, we ask that all members wear masks at church, for the consideration of others.

In particular, the church requires the following people to wear masks:

- Welcoming team/ushers.
- Those serving food (morning tea or meals). They are also required to wear gloves.
- Those preparing food on site (church kitchen).

Distribution of items

- Holy Communion can be conducted, and for now, we will continue to use pre-packaged elements served by servers wearing mask and gloves.
- Shared reusable items should not be passed around, including church Bibles and offering bags. Offerings should be made electronically or via a box at the rear of each hall.
- Bulletins and literature (single use) may be distributed.

Baptisms

- Baptisms may take place but not with water reused from a previous candidate.

Food service

- Food may be cooked and served on site. Food should be prepared by a designated team with strict adherence to Covid hygiene standards as well as the church's Food Handling guidelines.
- Food must be cooked and served by designated servers who are wearing appropriate PPE (mask and gloves). There is not to be help-yourself tables of food or drink unless items are pre-packaged.

Cleaning

- The church premises will be thoroughly cleaned by our church cleaners at least weekly.
- If there has been a Covid case in church, the premises will be thoroughly cleaned, and subject to advice from the Department of Health, be closed for a period. All affected people will be informed and advised.

Church meeting duration

Church meetings/gatherings in person indoors should not exceed 4 hours, otherwise attendees could be considered close contacts in the event of someone testing positive.

Zoom meetings remain an option for ministries if suitable.

Maximum capacity and physical distancing

The NSW government requires a maximum of **1 person per 2 sqm allowed on site at any one time at church**. For WSCCC:

- The maximum number of people attending on the whole site:
 - o 344 (2sqm) at Strathfield, including children
 - o 250 (2sqm) at Croydon Park, including children
- In addition to the above allowed are designated "staff" to run services, ie pastors, chairpersons, others on stage, music team, ushers and Sunday School teachers. Within each service, we expect this to be roughly 10-15 additional people allowed.
- Maximum capacity in each hall or room:
 - o Total capacity only refers to the number of people on the entire site, not per room or hall.
 - o Seating in each room or hall should maintain reasonable physical distancing between non-related parties. A useful guideline is to allow generous leg room between rows, and then ask unrelated parties to leave a spare seat between them. Alternatively an arm's length between people during fellowship.

Rules for external bookings

- All external bookings require special approval by the whole Diaconate (not ad hoc by individual deacons or pastors), and will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the monthly Diaconate meeting. Other booking conditions apply (as per church guidelines).
- All bookings are tentative only, pending changes in Covid restrictions and our church's internal ministry requirements. The church will endeavour to honour approved bookings, and we will seek to provide at least 2 weeks' notice of cancellation (but Covid regulations may be more rapid).

- External organisations will be responsible for Service NSW QR code registrations, not the church, although the WSCCC QR code will be available.