

Covid-19 Safe management plan

V30, 1/3/2022

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

We thank God that by the end of February, the severity and number of Covid (omicron variant) infections has been subsiding in NSW. We are encouraged by the NSW Government's projections and confidence to reopen the community to most activities, including church.

As a church, we are guided by NSW Government's guidelines and regulations about Covid. However, we understand that many people remain cautious about in-person activities. Therefore our own **church guidelines will, temporarily, go over and above the government's requirements for Covid.**

We want to assure everyone that it is safe to return to church on site for Sunday services and other ministry activities. **Although we are allowed many freedoms from regulations which attendees can enjoy, our priority is rather to provide confidence to those who are cautious. It is they who can know that attending church is even safer than interacting in the general community.**

Our church's special Covid guidelines

Although the following guidelines are not required by law, we believe that these additional measures are appropriate in our church to keep our members doubly safe and confident to attend. **These guidelines will be in place until March 20, 2022.**

1. **Masks:** are to be worn indoors at all times please.
2. **Congregational seating:** please allow one empty seat between unrelated people. There is no density limit for seating capacity.
3. **Food:** no food to be served indoors, but allowable outside or under the awning.
4. **Vaccinations:** all attendees are encouraged to be fully vaccinated, including boosters when due.

From March 21, 2022:

1. Masks are not compulsory but strongly encouraged.
2. Food may be served indoors at church, including morning tea, lunches and dinners. Masks may be removed for eating and drinking.

Church services

All our Sunday services will have resumed on-site worship at their usual times and locations from the beginning of March.

Each service will also maintain online services, accessible for those unable to attend in person. Gradually, these online services will be ceased as we encourage people to join us for church life in person.

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.

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 RAT/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

QR code registration is no longer 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 (**including booster**) 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 (until at least March 20).

Masks

Although the government does not require masks to be worn, we ask that all members wear masks at church until March 20, for the consideration of others. From March 21, masks are still recommended at church.

Masks are not required for:

- Speakers/songleaders on stage.
- Children under 12y.

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.
- Until March 20, food may only be consumed outdoors (on the lawn or under the awning).
- From March 21, food may be served and consumed indoors (with removal of masks).

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.

Maximum capacity and physical distancing

The NSW government no longer mandates density limits or maximum capacity for churches (for Covid). However, as a general rule, **we encourage all attendees to leave one seat empty between unrelated parties.**

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).