

Message from the Vicar General, Very Reverend Dr David Ranson - COVID Restrictions update

1 message

Communications <communications@bbcatholic.org.au>

6 November 2021 at 17:51

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

Overnight we have received clarity regarding the changes to COVID restrictions, specifically for Places of Worship. Click here to see the updated [COVID Safety Plan for Places of Worship](#), which will become effective on Monday, 8 November.

To summarise, from Monday 8 November until 15 December, or NSW reaches a 95% double vaccination rate, the following will apply:

- Density limits for places of worship will be **1 person per 2 square meters**.
- **Electronic sign-in is mandatory** by one of the following methods:
 - An individual using their device to check in with the venue's **QR Code**
 - Welcomers assist those without their own device by checking them in via the **Service NSW webform** associated with your parishes' COVID Safe Business registration. See attachment for support in setting this up. This webform allows for;
 - **manual sign-in by typing in the individual's details** or
 - **scanning their COVID check-in card**.
 - Paper sign-in is still permissible in cases where it is necessary; however, **the records must be digitised** (into an Excel spreadsheet or similar) **within 4 hours** when requested from an authorised officer.
 - **Please note** - If an individual refuses to sign in, we recommend that you do not refuse entry. Instead, ensure you have reminded them of their responsibility to sign in under the Public Health Order. Welcomers or Parish staff should not engage in a debate with the person.
- Singing and dancing by unvaccinated congregants is not allowed in indoor areas. Although singing and dancing by vaccinated congregants are now allowed, **we recommend you continue to discourage congregational singing until the whole congregation can sing**.
- Face masks remain mandatory.
- We recommend that you continue to postpone face-to-face gatherings in parish facilities other than the Place of Worship until after 15 December, or we reach a 95% double vaccination rate.

Schools

From Monday 8 November, schools will now operate at **Level 3 setting**. Please check department of Education [website for all the details](#). CSBB and CSNSW have confirmed following are allowable for our Catholic Schools;

- Assemblies and presentations outdoors on school site. Therefore, school Masses will be permissible. Whole school masses can be celebrated at school if they are held outdoors, with year groups separated where possible. The priest and any ministers must be fully vaccinated.
- Classes or cohorts can also attend mass offsite in their local parish if the mass is conducted for the class or cohort and other parishioners are not in attendance.
- Graduations and formals from 1 December. However, Year 12 formals and graduations should not happen until after the final exam for that school's HSC cohort, which may be as late as 3 December.
- Community use of school sites, outside of school hours and in outdoor spaces only, where possible.

We have received many enquiries over the past weeks, which we have had to manage on a case-by-case basis. To provide some guidance for your planning, I offer the following points for your discernment;

- Clergy should provide to their parish schools evidence of their vaccination status or medical contravention.
- The use of parish buses to transport the elderly and disabled to mass remains on hold until 15 December.
- It may be possible to recommence visiting the sick or elderly in hospitals and aged care facilities. This would be dependent on the facilities regulation.

Let us continue to keep each other in our prayer, and most importantly, safe by all our actions as we enable our parish communities to come back together again.

Sincerely yours on behalf of Bishop Anthony,

Fr David

Very Rev Dr David Ranson PP VG



Vicar General

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