

Risk Assessment for St Laurence's Church – Return to Mass

Version 1 - 3rd July 2020

Risk	Mitigation
Virus transmission via surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance/exit doors fixed open at start/end of Mass • All benches, kneelers, seats in use and banister rails to balcony wiped down between Masses. • Increased regular cleaning of church – particular focus on likely touch points (e.g., door handles). • Sanitiser at entry points.
Virus transmission via distribution of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No distribution of Mass books or similar non-single-use materials. • Any material distributed (e.g., newsletters) is only on the basis that the congregation take that material away with them. • Any items left behind to be collected, bagged, and steward to immediately sanitise hands.
Inadequate social distancing when seated in church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of Masses to spread attendance – e.g., weekly 5pm Sunday Mass; encourage use of weekday Masses instead of Sunday. • Initially use 2m spacing. Face coverings encouraged, not required. Keep under review. As we understand usage and capacity better, and guidelines change, we may change, e.g., to 1m + face covering. • To support 2m spacing, limit seating in church as follows: alternate benches only; one household (up to 7) per bench OR one couple and one individual OR 2 individuals per bench. • On balcony, remove chairs to limit seating. Groups must sit on bench or available chairs at least 2m distanced. Capacity depends on group sizes, but maximum is 16 (e.g., 4 groups of 4). • Altar party must remain 2m apart at all times. Two readers should sit 2m apart in seats beside the sacristy door. • Once benches & balcony filled as above, no further entry allowed. • No seating in the Narthex. • Estimated capacity on this basis = 65 + altar party.
Inadequate social distancing when entering / leaving church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter via rear porch only. “No entry” signage to be placed on Narthex and coded entry doors. • Entrants greeted by a steward and shown to their seats. Next group must remain in the porch until called forward by a steward (once the previous group is seated). Seats to be filled from the front of the church, working backwards – as specified above. • If ‘downstairs’ looks likely to fill up, mobile people willing to sit in the balcony should be directed there until it is at capacity. Use the stairs to the left to enter the balcony – opposite stairs to exit. • At the end of Mass, only when directed to do so, the congregation should leave bench-by-bench – starting with the front bench via the Narthex and, once a steward has confirmed there is space outside, the rear bench (or balcony as directed by a steward) by the porch. Each bench should wait for the previous bench to empty before beginning to leave.

<p>Inadequate social distancing outside church</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A steward should ensure an orderly queue outside the church. • The queue should run from the porch door, out through the entrance gate to the car park, and along the pavement outside towards the library, keeping close-in to the church boundary. The portion within the car park should be marked out by cones. This arrangement allows for 2m spacing, an orderly straight line, while minimizing interaction with cars.
<p>Virus transmission during communion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise movement within the church, communion will be given by the priest and a Eucharistic Minister moving along the vacant benches and giving communion, in the hand only, to people in the bench behind. People receiving communion should stand in their bench, if possible. Those not wishing to receive should remain seated. Communicants should be asked to extend their hands fully, maintaining maximum distance from the minister. The ministers will wear face coverings when giving communion.
<p>Procedures are not known or followed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewards must be in place for all Masses. We should have 4 stewards for Masses that we expect to be busier (Sat 6pm, Sun 9.30am 11am 5pm) and 2 stewards for other Masses. • Stewards must be identifiable and visible: e.g., wear 'hi vis' vests. • Stewards must be briefed: a set of instructions will be written and distributed to all stewards and reviewed in a 'Zoom' call prior to the first Mass. This will be recorded and any stewards who volunteer subsequently will be asked to watch before participating.
<p>Virus transmission due to use of toilets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets must be open for public health reasons but require heightened signage and cleaning regime. • The congregation will be informed that all children must be accompanied and asked to wipe down surfaces that they have touched after use – cleaning materials will be provided to do this.
<p>Virus transmission due to practice of the Mass - handling eucharistic elements, singing...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow all aspects of the relevant guidance provided by the Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales.
<p>Unable to support 'Track and trace' processes if required due to no record of attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The congregation will be requested to bring a slip of paper on which they have written a contact name, contact phone/email, and the number in their party. For those that do not do this, contact slips requesting these details and a pencil will be placed in each bench. Slips and used pencils are to be dropped into a box on exiting. Slips from each Mass will be placed in an envelope, labelled, sealed, and destroyed after 3 weeks if not required. Pencils will be quarantined.
<p>Non-compliance or conflict when people coming to church are denied entry due to church being full</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance publicity should encourage people to spread attendance over available Mass options including live streaming. Highlight the possibility that they may be denied entry if capacity is reached. • There should be a process in place to take the names and contact details of people denied entry so that they can be offered reserved spaces at future Masses. • Once capacity and usage are better-understood, we should consider other options to manage numbers – e.g., online ticketing.

Difficulty managing social distancing with young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families to be asked to keep children in their benches, and to continue with live streaming attendance if this is not possible. This guidance to be published via newsletter, website, Facebook, email.• No children's liturgy until further notice.
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