

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

Version 4 – 19th June 2021

Risk	Mitigation
Virus transmission via surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance/exit doors fixed open at start/end of Mass • Ensuring enhanced daily cleaning of Church – more regular cleaner, asking attendees to wipe down seats after weekday Mass attendance, cleaning of the church by stewards after busiest Saturday and Sunday Masses. • 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. • '1m+' spacing. Ask congregation to wear face coverings (unless exempt). • To support 1m+ spacing, limit seating in church as follows: alternate benches only; one household (up to 7) per bench OR two couples OR a group of up to 3 plus one other individual per bench. • On balcony, remove chairs to limit seating. Groups must sit on bench or available chairs at least 1m distanced. Capacity depends on group sizes, but maximum is 16 (e.g., 4 groups of 4). • Altar party must remain 1m apart at all times. Two readers should sit 1m apart in seats beside the sacristy door. • Once benches & balcony filled as above, no further entry allowed. • Seating for two groups permitted in the narthex. • Seating is permitted in the Parish room, with attendees using the screen and audio feed – but groups must be 1m+ spaced. Depending on group size, this allows 3 or 4 groups in this space. • Estimated capacity on this basis = 70 + altar party.
Inadequate social distancing when entering / leaving church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter via rear porch. "No entry" signage to be placed on Narthex and coded entry doors. • At busy Masses, 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). • 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, the congregation should leave bench-by-bench – starting with the front bench via the Narthex and 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.

Inadequate social distancing outside church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At busier Masses, a steward should ensure an orderly queue outside the church.
Virus transmission during communion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following all of the protocols for the distribution of Holy Communion published by the Bishops Conference for England and Wales. The communion procession has now been reinstated for people in church. Groups should approach bench-by-bench at 1m+ spacing in single file and return via the side aisles. Communion should still be taken out to the narthex and Parish room.
Virus transmission due to 'aerosol' particles in the air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m social distancing and face coverings, as above Refresh air in the church between Masses – on days with multiple Masses, doors and windows on each side of the church should be opened between Masses. Adequate ventilation during Mass – at busier Masses, narthex and inner porch doors should remain open and at least 2 windows on each side of the church should be opened.
Procedures are not known or followed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewards must be in place for all Masses. We should have 3 stewards for the busiest Masses (11am and feasts) 2 for relatively busy (6pm, 9.30), 1 for quiet (5pm, 8am and weekdays). Stewards must be identifiable – 'hi vis' vests should be worn if required to ensure this. 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. Recorded instructions will be made available. We will have periodic update meetings for stewards.
Virus transmission due to use of toilets	<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.
Virus transmission due to practice of the Mass - handling eucharistic elements, singing...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow all aspects of the relevant guidance provided by the Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales.
Unable to support 'Track and trace' processes if required due to no record of attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QR codes will be provided in the porch and outside church for the official NHS app and (for those that do not have the app) to sign up via the Parish website. Contact slips and pencils will be available on entering the church. 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.
Non-compliance or conflict when people coming to church are denied	<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.

<p>entry due to church being full</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For special occasions such as Christmas, we will use other options to manage numbers – e.g., online ticketing.
<p>Difficulty managing social distancing with young children</p>	<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.
<p>Enhanced risk due to ‘aerosol particles’ when live musicians (including singers) are participating in a worship service, or preparing to participate in a worship service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than eight people may sing at any one time. • Where live music is part of a service, the fact that any congregation present should not join in must be clearly communicated to the congregation. • All musicians shall be positioned at least 2m from each other and from any other person not in their household. • All musicians shall wear face coverings at all times except while singing. • Ventilation of the building shall include at least four windows being open on each side. • Any microphone that is used shall be cleaned after use or quarantined for at least 48 hours. • Any pews, kneelers and other hard surfaces within a 3m radius shall be cleaned before that space is used again, or the space shall be quarantined for at least 48 hours.