



## **OUR LADY OF THE VALLEYS PROTOCOLS**



Dear Parishioners

## REVIEW OF PROTECTION FRAMEWORK RESPONSE

The Government has advised that from 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 all of New Zealand will move into the Protection Framework Response (Traffic Light System). This replaced the previous Alert Level System that was introduced in March 2020.

This Framework is based on 3 levels of responses based on a series of factors that include vaccination coverage; capacity of health and disability services; contact tracing; transmission of COVID in the community, including its impact on the key populations.

Localised lockdowns may be part of the response among all levels

Three levels of response are provided for

- ❖ **Green** – where there is COVID-19 across the country, but there is **LIMITED** community transmission; COVID hospitalisations are manageable
- ❖ **ORANGE** – increasing community transmission with increasing pressure on the health system; increasing risk to at-risk populations
- ❖ **RED** – action needed to protect health system or at-risk populations

Vaccinations Certificates (passes) will be part of the regime. Some activities and events will have to be decided to be either

- **VACCINE PASSES EVENTS - (VACCINE CERTIFICATE/PASS required** or
- **RESTRICTED-NUMBERS EVENTS - NO VACCINE PASS required.**

**Details around the activities and restrictions at the three levels are found in Appendix A (or the Health Ministry website**

(LINK: <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/COVID-19-Protection-Framework/COVID-19-Protection-Framework-22-October-2021.pdf> )

## MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup> ANNOUNCEMENT

The Government has announced on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November that the Wellington region will be placed in the **ORANGE LEVEL SETTINGS**.

In brief this means that Masses, liturgies and gatherings will be advertised as **VACCINE PASS Events** or **RESTRICTED-NUMBER Events**

Vaccine Pass Events have no limit on the number who can gather, but Vaccine Passes are required to be shown to gain entry to the venue.

Restricted-Number events are open to the vaccinated and unvaccinated but numbers attending at ORANGE will be restricted to 50.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS of Operating at PROTECTION FRAMEWORK for Our Lady of the Valleys Parish

- The framework covers all gatherings and liturgical events in the Parish
- Vaccination Certificates/Passes are part of the response and the Parish is required to comply with the Government Framework especially for places of worship.
- The Parish will strive to make vaccinated people feel safe, given that vaccinations do not protect against transmission of the virus
- We need to be inclusive and ensure ministry can continue safely for those who are unvaccinated
- **WEEKDAY MASSES (Tuesday – Saturday morning) in OLOV will be provided on a RESTRICTED-NUMBERS basis and will be attendance will be available for both Vaccinated and Unvaccinated parishioners. Appropriate levels of social distancing, mask wearing and sanitising will be required. Attendance levels (Green 100; Orange 50; Red 25) will be monitored and adhered to.**
- Expected numbers at weekday services at LEVELS Green and Orange will be significantly lower than the limit, so NO prebooking will be required. Contact tracing WILL be required.
- Where and when **RESTRICTED-NUMBER MASSES** are offered for Sunday Eucharist prebooking will be required to monitor attendance levels and contact tracing. This will be provided via the Picktime online booking system as per previous situation).
- Where **VACCINE PASSES MASSES** are offered for Sunday Eucharist proof a person's Ministry of Health approved Vaccination Pass will be required to all entry to the service. This is a Government requirement.
- There are restrictions for Holy Communion and Sign of Peace
- The Plan is an evolving document and will be updated as Government and Bishops announcements allow and their practical implementation in the Parish is assessed.
- Your understanding and patience as we move into this new framework



Following are details that help flesh out the requirements and practical effects relating to celebrations at Our Lady of the Valleys Services.

- Schedule A Government overview of COVID-19 PROTECTION FRAMEWORK
- Schedule B Guidelines from Cardinal John relating to gatherings in Archdiocese under PROTECTION FRAMEWORK
- Schedule C **Guidelines for faith-based gatherings under PROTECTION FRAMEWORK as applied to Our Lady of the Valleys Parish Heretaunga/Stokes Valley.**

# New Zealand COVID-19 Protection Framework

**Factors for considering a shift between levels:** vaccination coverage; capacity of the health and disability system; testing, contact tracing and case management capacity; and the transmission of COVID-19 within the community, including its impact on key populations.

**Localised lockdowns:** will be used as part of the public health response in the new framework across all levels, and there may still be a need to use wider lockdowns (similar to the measures in Alert Level 3 or 4).

**Vaccination certificates:** Requiring vaccination certificates will be optional for many locations. There are some higher-risk settings where they will be a requirement in order to open to the public. Some places won't be able to introduce vaccination requirements, to ensure everyone can access basic services, including supermarkets and pharmacies.

<div>COVID-19 across New Zealand, including sporadic imported cases.</div> <div>Limited community transmission.</div> <div>COVID-19 hospitalisations are at a manageable level.</div> <div>Whole of health system is ready to respond - primary care, public health, and hospitals.</div>	<div><b>General settings</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record keeping/scanning required</li> <li>Face coverings mandatory on flights, encouraged indoors</li> <li>Public facilities - open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail - open</li> <li>Workplaces - open</li> <li>Education (schools, ECE, tertiary) - open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specified outdoor community events - allowed</li> </ul>
<div>Increasing community transmission with increasing pressure on health system.</div> <div>Whole of health system is focusing resources but can manage - primary care, public health, and hospitals.</div> <div>Increasing risk to at risk populations.</div>	<div><b>General settings</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record keeping/scanning required</li> <li>Face coverings mandatory on flights, public transport, taxis, retail, public venues, encouraged elsewhere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events (indoor/outdoor)</li> <li>Close contact businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gyms</li> </ul>
<div>Action needed to protect health system - system facing unsustainable number of hospitalisations.</div> <div>Action needed to protect at-risk populations.</div>	<div><b>General settings</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record keeping/scanning required</li> <li>Face coverings mandatory on flights, public transport, taxis, retail, public venues, recommended whenever leaving the house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public facilities - open with up to 100 people, based on 1m distancing</li> <li>Retail - open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing</li> <li>Workplaces - working from home encouraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education - schools and ECE open with public health measures and controls</li> <li>Specified outdoor community events - allowed with capacity limits</li> </ul>
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## SCHEDULE A – Government Overview of COVID-19 PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

## **SCHEDULE B The following guidelines are taken from the Cardinal John Dew's directive website relating to gatherings and Masses under Protection Framework**

### **1. Safety precautions for Masses, funerals and other parish gatherings WITHOUT VACCINE PASSES**

- ❖ The 25, 50 or 100-person limits (depending on the level) must be strictly observed. This limit includes the priest.
- ❖ Both vaccinated and unvaccinated people may attend a restricted number gathering where vaccine passes are not required.
- ❖ Parishes must have a system for containing numbers at restricted number Vigil and Sunday Masses, and to avoid turning people away at the church door.
- ❖ Social distancing of at least 1m, and preferably 1.5-2m must be observed.
- ❖ All participants must wear masks, and only remove them briefly to receive communion. Children at Year 4 and above must wear masks.
- ❖ There are to be no altar servers, only one reader, and the priest processes in and out alone.
- ❖ There is to be no holy water in fonts,
- ❖ Holy Communion is to be under one kind and only in the hand,
- ❖ There is to be no singing.
- ❖ People are to leave quickly and the priest should lead by example.
- ❖ Other gatherings without vaccine passes are to be avoided.
- ❖ The instructions of the funeral director are to be followed for all stages of a funeral.

## **2. Safety precautions for Masses, funerals and other parish gatherings WITH VACCINE PASSES**

### **3.**

- ❖ In accord with government requirements vaccine passes must be checked at the entry to the church.
- ❖ Even though there are no restrictions on numbers, overflowing congregations are to be avoided.
- ❖ There is to be no singing.
- ❖ People are to be reminded that although they are vaccinated, they need to observe basic safety precautions, such as not coming to Mass if even slightly unwell.
- ❖ Participants are to wear masks, and the priest should lead by example.
- ❖ There is to be no holy water in fonts,
- ❖ Holy Communion is to be under one kind and only in the hand,

## SCHEDULE C

To comply with Cardinal John Dew's directive website relating to Masses and other liturgical gatherings under the Protection Framework Our Lady of the Valleys will observe the following procedures around all Liturgical Gatherings

- ❖ From 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 **WEEKDAY MASSES** (Tuesday to Saturday morning) will be celebrated in Our Lady of the Valleys Parish with the **RESTRICTED-NUMBERS** restrictions.
- ❖ From Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 5:30pm **SUNDAY MASSES** in Our Lady of the Valleys Parish will be celebrated as a **RESTRICTED NUMBERS event**
- ❖ **Other Masses** (funerals etc) held will be advertised on a case by case basis
- ❖ he building earlier than normal as it may take a little longer to get to your seat etc due to COVID requirements.
- ❖ The **Picktime online booking system** will be retained for **SATURDAY EVENING/SUNDAY RESTRICTED-NUMBER MASSES ONLY**. This provides CONTRACT TRACING information but also ensures that the limits on gatherings will be maintained. Details of how to book will be published in the newsletter. For those not on the internet please contact the Parish Office who will be able to make the booking for you.
- ❖ Attendees at each **VACCINE PASSES** Sunday Mass will be verified that they have a valid Vaccine Pass. Contact tracking will still be required.
- ❖ When the limit of attendees for a **RESTRICTED-NUMBERS** gathering is reached or it begins the external doors will be locked and no further attendees will be admitted.
- ❖ For **RESTRICTED MASSES** please leave in-between pews empty. This will maintain the social distancing required.
- ❖ When a church is used for a Mass at the end of the service surfaces used need to be sanitised. Volunteers will be organised to undertake this task.

- ❖ For **RESTRICTED MASSES** Holy Communion will be brought to the congregation in their pews by ministers wearing masks. There is no need for the congregation to leave their seat during the service.
- ❖ Parishioners are encouraged **NOT** to linger and chat in the foyer as this could compromise the social distancing. Please leave the building at the end of the service. When outside socializing may occur but remember social distancing.
- ❖ The Living Waters Café will resume in February 2022. At this stage it will remain suspended.
- ❖ Children's Liturgy at the 10:30am Mass will resume when school returns in February 2022
- ❖ For Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament masks must be worn in the chapel
- ❖ Rosters will continue to be published as we look forward to returning to celebrations as we have done previously with fewer ministers required (ie 1 reader rather than 1 leader/2 readers at Our Lady of Grace Church).
- ❖ An **COVID WARDEN** will co-ordinate efforts at each Mass to ensure protocols are followed and appropriate sanitising is undertaken at the end of each service.

**Contact Tracing is essential to reduce the community spread of COVID-19-**

**We will be recording details of all who attend Mass. Please depart earlier than usual to allow time to record your details at the Church. This will allow services to start on time and reduce a bottle-neck at entry**

