



# COVID PROTECTION FRAMEWORK POLICY

## AN INTRODUCTION

*“Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

Philippians 2:4

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’”*

Matthew 22:37-39

As a consequence of the Government announcement of the move to the COVID Protection Framework from 3 December 2021 we need to revise our guidance and planning accordingly. This document provides an overview of more detailed Policy Guidance which will be available next week following final Government announcements. Current Government guidance can be primarily found here <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/traffic-light-system/>. However, it should be noted that guidance found on other Government websites also apply to faith organisations. For example, all regulations relating to events and gatherings apply to us and many of the regulations relating to businesses also apply. Our Diocesan guidance will seek to capture all these aspects and will constantly be updated.

The Diocese is in the process of finalising our COVID Protection Framework policy. This detailed document will be available at some point in the week beginning 29 November following final Government announcements. Significant detail is still being developed by Government and changes to existing material on government websites are happening *all the time*.

While the shift to the COVID Protection Framework may seem challenging, we are confident that once we have our Diocesan and local planning in place for each of the “Traffic Light” levels we will be able to develop rhythms of gathering that will become familiar and manageable. Considerably more freedom will be enjoyed, but greater care will also be required. We encourage you to keep these things in mind:

- We are a family in God who are followers of Christ – our strength comes from our commitment to one another.
- Care for your neighbour, especially the most vulnerable
- Express our gratitude to God for being able to gather when so many in the world cannot.
- Continue to keep it simple, begin with what you know you can manage and gradually expand what you offer. We will offer advice and share experience.
- Be kind, tolerant and patient towards each other, especially those who are feeling particularly vulnerable or who hold different views from you.

It is challenging to hold together principles of safety, inclusion and the public good. As we establish our Diocesan policies within Government COVID Protection framework and the relevant Public Health Orders we are acutely aware that any decision excludes people from worship and fellowship and that exclusion is the opposite of the inclusion that Churches seek to foster. We need to do everything we can to mitigate decisions that exclude anyone from aspects of the life and practice of our local Churches. Just as we need to do everything we can to keep our most vulnerable people safe.



Given that final Guidance is still to come, if you are feeling that you cannot adjust to the required Covid level under the COVID Protection Framework by next Sunday and you have an Action Plan for operating under the current Level 2 then use that – It will be very close to what is required under Orange for non-vaccination mandated gatherings - you will be restricted to 50 people. Let the Bishop's Office know:

[bishopspa@wtanglican.nz](mailto:bishopspa@wtanglican.nz)

## KEY MESSAGES & DIOCESAN POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 1) **Public Health Measures:** People within ministry units and other diocesan places of work will use public health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including vaccinations, contact tracing, physical distancing, face coverings, ventilation, restricted gathering numbers, personal and venue hygiene, and work from home where recommended.
- 2) **Use of vaccination certificates for all gatherings, events and meetings will be mandated as the norm** in the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki. This option provides the greatest safety for all and particularly the most vulnerable and it gives the greatest freedoms within the event or gathering itself. (For example, under both Green and Orange levels food and drink are permitted. Singing will be permitted, although the wearing of masks is strongly recommended. The NZ Choral Federation have mask designs for choirs. This Virus spreads in water particles.) This Policy setting is based on
  - i) Government health order;
  - ii) The Government's COVID-19 protection framework levels;
  - iii) The agreement of the Bishops of the New Zealand Dioceses that this will be the norm for all services events and gatherings in Dioceses. (See the full message from the Bishops below.)

However it is very important to know now that there is **provision** for you to apply to **offer worship services where there is no proof of vaccination either regularly or as a one-off gathering** if any Ministry Unit or Minister believes it is / they are called to do so by completing the exemption form. It is possible to host both vaccinated and unvaccinated gatherings on the same premises subject to physical separation, cleaning, and gaps in time, etc – further information will be provided on this. It is intended to have simple accessible systems for developing a safety plan which will be required in such circumstances and for seeking the exemption. Details of this policy will follow in the full Policy Guidance document.

- 3) **Vaccinations will be mandated for**
  - a) Roles subject to a government health order; and
  - b) All clergy who hold a licence or Permission to Officiate; and
  - c) Any person performing a role which, following formal diocesan risk assessment, is deemed that vaccinations should be mandated.

Full details of this policy will follow in the Policy Guidance document. These details will include information on how this policy can be handled pastorally in cases where either by choice or medical requirement the individual is not vaccinated. A risk assessment process will be supported by the Diocese in each case.

The full Policy Guidance document will cover many areas of detail, and it will also offer guidance about how to implement in your local setting and how to handle the pastoral challenges that living in these times bring with them. However, our hope is that these introductory pages will give a sense of direction.



Please be patient, because the reality is that we are still seeking government clarification on a number of areas which are very important for our policy development. All Policy Settings will be completely reviewed in March 2022, adaptations will be made as required. We welcome your feedback and advice. Please make any recommendations and submit any questions to [bishopspa@wtanglican.nz](mailto:bishopspa@wtanglican.nz).

## SUMMARY

- A detailed policy document is still being prepared.
- It can only be finalised after Government regulation is finalised.
- No solution or policy will be perfect. Our key principles are safety, care of the vulnerable, love for our neighbour, and the common good.
- Observing public health measures is critical.
- There will be **two pathways** – the normative **or** a negotiated provision.
- Vaccinations will be mandatory (as described above).

## PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM THE ANGLICAN BISHOPS, TIKANGA PĀKEHĀ

From the time of our nation's first lockdown response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently throughout these extraordinary times, we as Bishops have met weekly together to pray, to support one another and to reflect on our leadership through the rapid changes in our nation's continuing response to Covid-19. The foundational unit of the Anglican Church is the Diocese; that group of individuals, communities and organisations who gather around the bishop. We honour and respect the independence and integrity of each Diocese, whilst seeking in these circumstances, to offer as much consistency and commonality as we possibly can.

Out of a deep love for the church and the people we serve, we have sought to approach the next stage of our nation's response to this world-wide health emergency in a way that reflects two key agreements in common:

1. The normative position for worship, events and gatherings, is that they will be fully-vaccinated. In other words, vaccine certificates will be required to attend services of worship, events and gatherings. This fully vaccinated approach, as the norm, reflects the best and most current health advice available to us, as we seek to do all that we can to minimise the risk of anyone becoming infected with Covid-19.
2. We have a pastoral responsibility for the care of all people. This responsibility is to both vaccinated and non-vaccinated, but particularly to the most vulnerable. This care includes those who may not be able to worship with us because they have chosen not to be vaccinated. It also includes those who are in quarantine after exposure to infected people and are awaiting test results. Such pastoral responsibility also includes those who are ill, or those who are choosing to limit their potential exposure to infection because of their level of vulnerability or the level of vulnerability to members of their households. We are committed to supporting local Churches in finding ways to minister to all.



As bishops, we are committed to constantly reviewing these principles, and the protocols and policies that are being established in each Diocese regularly, to ensure that we continue to reflect the greatest level of care possible.

As we continue to navigate this season together, we would also like to take this opportunity to thank and honour all those who lead and serve within our church in Christ's name and who work for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. We continue to faithfully hold each other before God in prayer.

*"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7*

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Ross Bay  
Bishop Steven Benford  
Bishop Peter Carrell  
Bishop Justin Duckworth  
Bishop Andrew Hedge  
Bishop Steve Maina  
Bishop Philip Richardson  
Bishop Eleanor Sanderson