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3 December 2020

**Revised Directives for Churches and Chapels within the
Catholic Archdiocese of Perth from
The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On **Wednesday, 25 November 2020** the Western Australian Government announced that from **Saturday, 5 December 2020** identified Western Australian businesses and venues will be required to maintain **mandatory Contact Registers** for staff and patrons for the purpose of COVID-19 contact tracing by the WA Department of Health, should it be required. **Places of Worship** are specifically identified in this directive and therefore all Catholic churches, chapels and Mass centres are required to comply with this government directive. Any person aged 16 years and over who attends a place of worship, including patrons, staff, volunteers and contractors will be required to register their contact details. Records are not required to be collected for children under 16 years. More information regarding the WA government's directives concerning the reintroduction of Contact Registers can be found at:

<https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2020/11/Maintaining-contact-registers-a-requirement-to-keep-WA-safe.aspx>

Current WA Government Restrictions

The Western Australian and Federal Governments continue to issue ongoing public health advice in relation to COVID-19. The Archdiocese of Perth is guided by this advice through our ongoing commitment to monitoring any threat posed by COVID-19 to Catholic communities across our Archdiocese.

WA Government Exemptions Applicable to Places of Worship (effective from Tuesday, 1 December 2020).

Following the latest WA public health advice, exemptions from the 2 square metre rule now apply for **places of worship**. Places of worship can operate at 60 per cent capacity if this is a larger number than what was allowed under the 2 square metre rule.

The 60 per cent capacity applies only to the formal worship itself and not to the entire place of worship (i.e. church, mosque etc) at all times. Individuals must continue to maintain physical distancing between themselves and people of other households. This applies to any and/or all celebrations in the church or chapel.

This change came into effect on **Tuesday, 1 December 2020**

The WA government's '**Places of Worship to operate at a greater capacity under health advice**' media statement of **Tuesday, 1 December 2020** can be accessed here: <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2020/12/Places-of-worship-to-operate-at-a-greater-capacity-under-health-advice.aspx>



Latest information about current restrictions can be found at:

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

It remains incumbent upon each of us to continue to exercise responsibility in adhering to government health advice and directives through diligent citizenship as well as Christian concern and charity. The virus will probably continue to shape and challenge our responses for many months yet. I continue to be very grateful to you all for your endurance and unwavering persistence in supporting me and the clergy of the Archdiocese in providing for the needs of the faithful during this time of pandemic.

Contact Registers for Churches, Chapels and Mass Centres within the Archdiocese of Perth

This following information specifically addresses the reintroduction of **mandatory Contact Registers**. The WA government directive for Contact Registers will come into effect from **Saturday, 5 December 2020** and will apply across the Archdiocese of Perth to all places of worship. The website of the Archdiocese of Perth has a dedicated COVID-19 web page on which all statements from the Archdiocese of Perth in relation to COVID 19 can be found: <http://perthcatholic.org.au/COVID19.htm>

The following directives are required to be in place at each place of worship within the Archdiocese of Perth from **Saturday, 5 December 2020**:

Contact Registers

Churches, chapels and Mass centres are required to keep Contact Registers as part of their COVID Safety Plans. This is **mandatory**.

Any person aged 16 years and over who attends a place of worship, including patrons, staff, volunteers and contractors will be required to register their contact details. The details required for the contact register include:

- name;
- contact number;
- date, and
- arrival time at the venue.

Churches, chapels and Mass centres are required to keep the information provided on the Contact Register for twenty eight (28) days. The WA government will accept information that is either manually recorded or entered electronically onto a digital device or via the **SafeWA App**. SafeWA can be downloaded from Apple App Store or Google Play. This will allow venues which choose to use the SafeWA app time to implement it for Saturday, 5 December, 2020. More information can be found at <https://www.wa.gov.au/SafeWA>

SafeWA App

The Government has developed the **SafeWA App** for the purposes of contact tracing. **SafeWA is provided by the Department of Health** in Western Australia as part of WA's measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.

SafeWA is a contactless and convenient way for people to check-in at Western Australian venues and events. It lets people check-in by scanning a SafeWA QR code (a special type of barcode) that is displayed at a venue or event to confirm the date and time they were there.



The information is then sent to WA Health to help with faster COVID-19 related contact tracing - this helps to keep the community safe.

This is a voluntary app. You do not have to use SafeWA to check in at a venue or event. Alternative formats for mandatory contact registers are available, including other electronic tools or a paper-based system, depending on what is suitable for the venue or individual. Information provided by the **SafeWA App** will be deleted after twenty eight (28) days.

Information regarding the registration process for the **SafeWA App** can be located at <https://safewa.health.wa.gov.au> and a short video can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/482943535>

A **Toolkit** has also been developed by the WA government to assist you with various templates for paper-based contact registers, videos, information sheets, how to guides and social media tiles and is available at this link:

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/covid-19-coronavirus-contact-registers-stakeholder-toolkit#toolkits>

Registration of Venues/Businesses and Individuals using the SafeWA App

There is a registration process for venues/businesses and individuals. Parishes wishing to register their church, chapel or Mass centre should refer to the instructions at [https://safewa.health.wa.gov.au/files/SafeWA Health User Guide.pdf](https://safewa.health.wa.gov.au/files/SafeWA_Health_User_Guide.pdf)

Please note: When registering your church, chapel or Mass centre do so using the “**Business**” registration button (see page 5 of the *Health User Guide* in the weblink immediately above). Register the primary church of the parish as ‘the Business’ and then any other churches, chapels of Mass centres of the parish as ‘Venues’. A separate QR code will be provided for each location/venue.

Compliance and Penalties

Parish priests/priests-in-charge/administrators and rectors are responsible for organising the collection of the required information in each church, chapel of Mass centre and ensuring implementation of the government directives. Respective leadership groups in each community are encouraged to be involved in supporting their priests.

If Contact Register data is collected manually (paper/electronic data based) the information must be able to be provided to Government Health Department representatives within three (3) hours of a request being received. The **SafeWA App** will provide information directly and automatically to the Health Department.

All churches, chapels and Mass centres are required to set up controlled entry point(s) through which attendees pass where their details are taken or confirmation of ‘sign- in’ via their **SafeWA App** is sighted.

A contact template has been made available by the Western Australian Government for manual data collection. This resource can be located at: www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/Paper-based-contact-register-template-Single-sheet_0.pdf



Given potential delays affecting services, it is suggested that each church, chapel or Mass centre facilitate the entry of manual data by implementing an orderly and streamlined process for those who may wish to avail themselves of manual contact registration.

Compliance and Penalties

The WA government has specified fines and penalties for non-compliance with these processes. Failing to comply with the new requirements to maintain a contact register could result in fines and penalties of up to \$50,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a body corporate or 12 months' imprisonment.

Additional Directives Applicable Across the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth

In addition to the introduction of **mandatory Contact Registers** from **Saturday, 5 December 2020**, the following directives apply to the clergy, religious and the lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Perth:

- To remain open churches and chapels need to maintain high standards of hygiene and undertake frequent cleaning.
- **COVID Safety Plans:** Churches and chapels are to ensure that their COVID Safety Plans are updated and continue to be implemented. Churches and chapels must ensure that their COVID Safety Plan is available for inspection by authorised officers.
- Each church and chapel must complete a COVID Safety Plan.
- If your parish has multiple churches/premises, a COVID Safety Plan must be completed for each church/premise.
- Each church and chapel must display a COVID Safety Plan certificate at an entry point to the church or chapel.
- Hand sanitizers are to be available at each entrance to every church and chapel.
- Clear guidelines must be put in place to direct people on how to enter and exit the church or chapel to ensure that this is done systematically to ensure that appropriate physical distancing is observed.
- Holy Water fonts/stoups in all churches and chapels are to remain empty.
- Pews, seats, seatbacks, top rails, kneelers, doors, door knobs, microphones, sacristies, toilets/bathrooms and all other communal areas are to be cleaned, wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- Parish newsletters or bulletins should not be re-used. Sufficient copies should be made to ensure that people get copies, but then they must either take them home or dispose of them.
- Hymnals or shared copies of texts are not to be used.
- Persons who feel unwell, who have flu/respiratory symptoms, elevated body temperatures are not permitted to enter churches or chapels.
- **St Mary's Cathedral, Perth:** please refer to the St Mary's Cathedral website and social media pages for updates relevant to the Cathedral <https://stmaryscathedralperth.com.au/>
- Individuals must continue to maintain physical distancing between themselves and people of other households. This applies to any and/or all celebrations in the Church or chapel.

Masses

Churches and chapels are to put in place procedures to ensure that numbers of attendees at all Masses conform to current directives of the Western Australian Government. The faithful continue to be dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass. However, all Catholics



are encouraged to attend Mass whenever possible in accordance with Government directives.

- In view of the now long-standing practice of receiving Holy Communion in the hand, all Catholics receiving Holy Communion at Masses celebrated in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite are very strongly encouraged, out of concern for the health of others including the celebrant and other ministers, to refrain from receiving Holy Communion on the tongue.
- Offertory gifts are to be in closed vessels or, where this is not possible, vessels should be appropriately covered.
- Offertory processions are to be omitted.
- The Sign of Peace is to be given without physical contact.
- Collections are not to be taken up during the Mass. Churches and chapels can install boxes or containers for offerings at the entrance to the church or wherever they decide to be appropriate.
- The Precious Blood is not to be shared from the chalice at any Masses and is reserved to the celebrant(s) only. The celebrant and concelebrants are to receive from the chalice by intinction.
- All priests and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to wash their hands in soap and water, or are to use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser both immediately before and immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Physical distancing between people in the Communion Procession is to be observed. Churches and chapels may wish to dedicate ushers to facilitate the movement of people at the time Communion is distributed.
- Pews, seats, seatbacks, top rail and kneelers are to be wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- The pulpit, lectern, credence table, ministers' seats and anything handled by multiple people is to be wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- Congregational singing and singing led by a choir and/or cantors may be undertaken. In determining whether or not congregational singing and singing led by a choir and/or cantors is appropriate, the Parish Priest and his advisors will take full account of the risks to health and relevant Government recommendations.

Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA)

- Individual parishes may choose to celebrate the Rite of Initiation with RCIA Elect and candidates.
- Please contact Dr Carmel Suart, Director of the Office of Christian Initiation, on either 08 6104 3696 or christian.initiation@perthcatholic.org.au for any queries in relation to RCIA.

Baptism

- Fresh baptismal water must be used for each candidate.
- Full immersion baptism is prohibited unless the water in the baptismal pool is drained between candidates. The baptismal pool must subsequently be cleaned and disinfected after each full immersion.
- For the anointing with Chrism at baptism, the celebrant should use cotton balls with a separate one for each candidate. Used cotton balls must be disposed of appropriately after the celebration.

Confessions

- Priests can provide opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, according to the First Rite.



- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is to occur in a well-ventilated space and with appropriate social distancing being maintained at all times, including the absolution.
- The Sacrament can be celebrated in the sanctuary but provision for anonymity should be made.

Confirmations

- The Sacrament of Confirmation may be celebrated in accordance with the following directives. Each Parish Priest will make appropriate decisions about this matter after consultation with his sacramental team and other advisors. Confirmations may still be postponed until 2021.
- The celebrant is not to put his thumb into the Chrism and directly anoint the candidate.
- For the anointing with Sacred Chrism at Confirmation the celebrant should use cotton balls with a separate cotton ball used for each candidate.
- Used cotton balls must be burned after the celebration and the residue buried in soil.
- For 2020 only at this stage a general delegation for the celebration of Confirmation is granted for to all Parish Priests for communal parish celebrations of the Sacrament. Delegation for the confirmation for single individuals is still to be requested from the Office of the Vicar General.

Weddings

- Churches and chapels are permitted to celebrate weddings.

Funerals

- Churches and chapels are permitted to celebrate funerals.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (for individuals)

- Priests will continue to respond to appropriate requests to anoint people, and will continue to celebrate the sacrament on an individual basis.
- Upon request, and with strict compliance with restrictions in place within nursing homes, aged-care facilities and hospitals, priests will continue to minister the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas 2020 and an anticipated influx of people in churches and chapels across our archdiocese, I request that we each continue to faithfully and consistently apply all government health advice and directives in support of the common effort for safeguarding all Western Australians from exposure to COVID-19.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB DD
Archbishop of Perth