

Guidelines for Celebration of Sacraments under the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) and Post- RMCO period Dated 15th June 2020

These guidelines are to assist parishes to prepare and implement safety measures for the resumption of public worship, sacraments and other religious activities in our churches and chapels.

The duration of these measures would depend on the most current health advisories, guidance and restrictions issued by the government and health authorities. Experts do not expect a vaccine to be developed and readily made available in the near future which means that we would need to get use to these adapted measures in the long run.

These guidelines will be updated as the situation changes and in accordance with further guidance and SOP issued by the authorities.

The objective of these measures is to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which is a highly infectious disease, to members of our community, especially the most vulnerable.

For the successful implementation of these guidelines, the full cooperation of all parties (priests, pastoral workers, parish staff, parish lay leaders, volunteers and the laity) is required.

The Eucharist is described as “the source and summit of the Christian life.” The worship of God and the celebration of the sacraments are the paramount activities of the Church. We must, however, balance this priority with the safety that must be accorded to our members. One cannot be promoted at the expense of the other.

Now as we look ahead to the time we return to celebrating Mass with our parish communities, we want to do this in a reasonable and responsible way, with the safety of our people and respect for our sacramental life as our top priorities.

Although there are many clergy who wish to reopen their churches as soon as possible in order to welcome their parishioners home, and there are the lay faithful who have been anxiously waiting to return to the sacraments, it is responsible and prudent to err on the side of caution, and to adopt a phased-in approach to allow time for the procedures set out under these guidelines be tested and fine-tuned before we proceed to increase the frequency and capacity of our services.

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APPENDIX A

FOUR PHASES OF RESUMPTION AND PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS OF SACRAMENTS

PHASE	PERMITTED ACTIVITIES	PARISH TIMELINE
GENERAL PROVISIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The reason for a phased gradual roll-out is to not overwhelm the support team of volunteers and to test their ability to cope with these guidelines and to allow the parish to make further adjustments before increasing frequency and capacity of services. b) The duration of each phase should be determined by the Parish Priest and by the time required to adequately implement these guidelines and the SOP. c) The commencement of Phase 2 should not be earlier than the 28th of June 2020. d) Resumption of public Masses could be delayed at the discretion of the Parish Priest until numbers allowed to attend are increased by the authorities. 	
PHASE 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Forming a Parish Response Team to plan and coordinate implementation. b) Identification of volunteers & appointment of coordinators for each area of implementation. c) Preparing premises to make it a safe environment in compliance with these guidelines. d) Training of personnel and volunteers. e) Procurement of equipment. f) Putting up public health safety posters and signages and marking floors and benches for purposes of social distancing. g) Consultation with parish councils to determine the criteria and method of selection of participants for the public Masses when they are resumed. h) No public Masses or other sacraments (except Anointing of the Sick and Confessions) i) Anointing of the Sick and Confessions can be done with prior appointments. To limit this to urgent cases (at the discretion of the priest) and to follow these guidelines. j) Funeral services at home and parlour allowed with no Mass and no holy communion subject to existing guidelines. 	

<p>PHASE 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Only one public Mass on Sunday is allowed per week (try to accommodate various languages in a multilingual service). b) Infant baptisms (not adults) at home can be done by way of appointment, following these guidelines. c) Anointing of the Sick and Confessions by way of appointment. d) No funerals in church unless allowed by the SOP from the authorities. e) This phase will allow the capacity of the various support teams of volunteers to be tested. f) Ongoing fine-tuning of these guidelines. 	
<p>PHASE 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Services, sacraments and work mentioned under earlier phases continue. b) Increase roll-out of two additional public Masses on Sunday and one anticipated Mass (Sunset) on Saturday, provided that this is permitted by the authorities. c) Confessions before Masses may begin following the SOPs under these guidelines. d) Weddings, baptisms and confirmation of adults can be done following these guidelines, provided that these are permitted by the authorities. 	
<p>PHASE 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Services, sacraments and work mentioned under earlier phases continue. b) Daily public Masses, where needed, may resume, provided that these are permitted by the authorities. c) Additional Masses over the weekend may be added, provided the general principles under paragraph 10.0 of Appendix B are adhered to. 	

APPENDIX B

PREPARING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.0 Medical Basis of these general principles

1. The main route of transmission of COVID-19 is via the respiratory droplets of an infected individual, coming from coughing, sneezing, speaking or singing. This usually happens when individuals are kept close to one another (within 1 metre) for a prolonged period (more than 15 minutes) in a closed environment. It is also possible for the virus to spread from contaminated surfaces to another person through the eyes, nose and mouth, via their fingers and hands that have come into contact with these contaminated surfaces.
2. As such, the general principles laid out here are to minimise the risk of an infected individual (who might not exhibit any symptoms) unknowingly spreading the infection to another individual by emphasising social distancing from one another, minimising contact with commonly touched surfaces, and if touching these areas cannot be avoided, disinfecting one's hands and fingers before touching one's eyes, nose or mouth.

2.0 Compliance with SOP by the authorities

1. These guidelines are subject to the requirements set out in the SOP (hereinafter described as "the SOP") issued by the Ministry of National Unity, National Security Council, Ministry of Health or any other legitimate authorities that are mandated to issue them.
2. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of these guidelines and that of the SOP, the requirements set out under the SOP shall govern and control.

3.0 Safe Distancing

1. Queuing lines - Spots should be marked on the floor to ensure a minimum of 1 metre from the person in front and at the back. This should be done before the entrance of the Church, communion lines leading to the sanctuary, confession lines leading to the confessional, queues before entering toilets, elevators (where applicable).
2. Elevators – Slots should be clearly demarcated on the floor of the elevator to ensure that there is sufficient social distancing – 1 metre apart from each other. It is recommended that there should not be more than four slots within an elevator. The elevator should be reserved for disabled and the elderly. Other parishioners should be encouraged to use the staircase instead of the elevator.
3. No contact – All persons must avoid all forms of physical contact with each other.
4. Pews and seating – Benches should be marked to ensure that there is sufficient distance of at least 1 metre from the next person on the same pew and in the pew behind or in front. It is recommended that persons occupy only both ends of each alternate pew. For the next pew, the person may be allowed to sit only in the middle. This system should continue in an alternate fashion to ensure that there is safe distancing. Depending on the length of the pew, small families of not more than 4 persons (or disabled person with caregiver), may be seated together, provided that there is sufficient distance with the person on the other end of the pew. (See diagram below)
5. Pews should be numbered for the purpose of contact tracing.

ROW A1	Seat one (or a family of not more than 4)	X Vacant	Seat one
ROW A2	X Vacant	Seat One	X Vacant
ROW A3	Seat One	X	Seat one (or a family of not more than 4)
ROW A4	X Vacant	Seat One	X Vacant

4.0 Air-conditioning

1. According to latest research and medical opinion, an enclosed air-conditioned space poses greater risks as the circulation of the air increases the possibility of infection through air-droplets.
2. It would be preferable to turn off the air-conditioning, open windows and doors and use the fan.
3. The church may be cooled down by turning on the air-conditioning earlier and turning it off half an hour before the start of the service.
4. Scheduling Masses and other celebration during the earlier hours of the morning may also help in providing a cooler environment.
5. As an alternative, open air venues (car park) or covered porches or space with greater ventilation are preferable.

5.0 Entrance and Exit

1. Only one entrance should be opened for the purpose of temperature checking.
2. A different door from the entrance, if this is possible, should be designated as the exit. The parish, if this is warranted, could identify several exits to facilitate a quicker dismissal of the congregation from the premises.
3. Exit doors should be left opened so as to avoid touching door handles. Movable barriers could be placed to block these exits from being used as alternative entrances and these barriers could be removed by appointed ministers of hospitality/wardens.
4. Members of the congregation who arrive for the next Mass should be requested to stay outside until the end of the earlier service. A designated waiting area (with sufficient social distancing observed) could be set aside for this purpose. The waiting area should not be located near the exit point of the church to avoid congestion.
5. Preferably there should be a minimum of 60 minutes interval between services to allow parishioners to leave the church before the next congregation arrives and to allow the church to be cleaned.
6. Parishioners are to be reminded to not remain in the church or church compound or spend an unduly long time in church praying to allow the next congregation to enter.
7. At the conclusion of the Mass/ service, it is recommended that the ministers of hospitality (wardens/ushers) should direct the congregation to leave the church row by row to avoid a crowd building up at the exit.

6.0 Temperature Check and Contact Listing

1. Parishioners must be informed to arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the service to facilitate temperature checking and registration for contact listing.
2. Each parish should maintain a register to record the following details of each person who wishes to participate in the service (Visitors Book). Details should include: Name, Contact details, temperature reading, time of visit, place visited. An alternative way of doing registration, if this is available, is by scanning a QR code or using a mobile application. Video surveillance, if CCTVs are available, could be used as an alternative means of visually recording attendees.
3. Persons responsible for temperature check should be given prior training of the SOP, use of the temperature scanner, and provided with face masks and face shields, if this is available.
4. A bottle of hand sanitiser should be made available to all parishioners for use after their temperature has been taken, details registered and before they enter the church. Both the Visitors book and hand sanitiser should be placed on a table at the entrance of the church next to the area where the temperature scanning is done. All persons should bring their own pens or sanitise their hands before picking up the pen to write their details and they should sanitise their hands again when they are done writing. If a QR code is scanned, they only need to sanitise once before entering the church. Please see Appendix M for details.
5. Everyone who has completed temperature scanning and registration will be given a sticker (to indicate that they have been scanned and registered, in the event that they need to leave the church to use the toilet or for some other urgent purpose).
6. The priest, staff, liturgical ministers and volunteers must pass through the temperature scan and registration and be cleared before being allowed to enter the church before the service.
7. Anyone exhibiting a temperature of more than 37.5 degrees Celsius should not be admitted.

7.0 Fellowship and Canteen

1. Common areas used for fellowship and meals after or before Masses/services should not be open.
2. Parishioners and groups should not be allowed to use the canteen for any events or activities which involve the serving of meals.

8.0 Toilets and Waste disposals

1. Parishioners should be encouraged as far as possible to use toilets at home.
2. Church toilets should only be used for emergencies.
3. Cubicles and urinals must be marked with alternate units closed to ensure that there is sufficient social distancing. To either use barricades or tapes or signs to indicate that the unit is not to be used.
4. There should be no waiting or queues within toilets. All queues outside toilets should observe social distancing (with markers on the floor).
5. Hand soap should be made available in all toilets.
6. Dustbins with foot pedal activated lids should be placed throughout the church compound and in toilets.

7. Used face masks and glove, which cannot be recycled, should be disposed in separate bins designated for this purpose and should not be mixed with other waste material.

9.0 Cleaning

1. Disposable gloves and plastic bags need to be made available for emergency use should there be a body fluid spill.
2. Church and common areas should be cleaned after every service.
3. Microphones, ambo (lectern), organ keyboard, confessional, liturgical items would need to be cleaned and where possible disinfected after every service.
4. Parishioners need to be trained to maintain general cleanliness at their respective seats and kneelers. They are to be personally responsible in removing all discarded items from the pews, as this would increase the risk of contamination for others. An announcement could be projected at the end of the service to remind people of this.
5. Volunteers for the cleaning crew should be provided with a kit – facial mask (shield, if available), gloves, cleaning cloths, and other cleaning solution and equipment needed for the job.

10.0 Facial Masks

1. The priest(s) and all staff, volunteers and members of the congregation attending any services are to wear facial masks on the premises of the Church.

11.0 Holy Water Fonts

1. Holy Water fonts at the entrances of the Church should be emptied.

12.0 Size, Frequency, Length of Services

1. The size of the congregation for each Mass/service will be smaller due to limitations imposed in the SOP.
2. Due to the above limitations, the priest should ensure that those involved in any liturgical ministry should be kept to a reasonable number that would be necessary for a dignified celebration but not deny others of the opportunity to attend Mass.
3. The frequency of services depends on the time needed for one group to exit the church compound and for the next to arrive. Time is also needed to clean the church between the services. Consideration must also be given to the capacity of the priest to celebrate several Masses in a day whilst avoiding fatigue and burn out. The priest should not be allowed to celebrate more than three Masses in a single day.
4. The length of the Masses and services should be shortened. As a general rule, a Sunday Mass (and anticipated Masses on Saturdays) should not exceed one (1) hour. Masses on weekdays should not exceed 30 minutes (unless it is a Solemnity).
5. Alternate venues within a church could be used to allow cleaning to take place in the first venue when the second service is being conducted in another venue.
6. To protect the vulnerable and elderly, all persons with some underlying medical condition and the elderly, or aged 70 years and above should be advised to remain at home as they will be dispensed from their Sunday obligation. In any event, the age limits set by the SOP issued by the authorities must be followed.
7. All persons who are exhibiting flu-like symptoms, possess any infectious respiratory infection or who are under investigation for COVID-19 (PUIs) and persons who are

under quarantine are strictly prohibited from attending any public Masses, sacraments or other services.

8. To cater to the size of the parish population, the priest in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council should consider increasing the number of Masses or having Masses and other services on weekdays, apart from weekends.
9. To manage the apportionment of limited places for each Mass, one may consider using the following selection methods: according to BEC, based on ministries, services, languages, system of prior appointment, etc.

13.0 Preparing a plan

1. It is recommended that parishes should take at least two to three weeks to ensure that the above safety measures are in place before the resumption of any public Masses or other services.
2. The Parish Priest should set up a Parish Response Team (PRT) of suitable parishioners to assist him in preparing the Church and implementing the SOPs. The SOP for the PRT is found in Appendix L.
3. Recruitment of robust and healthy volunteers should be done for these following support teams – Cleaning, Medical Support, Temperature Scanning and Registration, Ministers of Hospitality.
4. Volunteers and liturgical ministers should undergo a training and orientation of the various safety measures and SOPs before the resumption of public Masses and services.
5. Posters/Reminders should be placed around the church compound to remind everyone about the importance of social distancing and other public safety measures. Infographic posters can be obtained from the Ministry of Health website.
6. It is recommended that the parish engages a professional cleaning company to undertake an industrial and health standard disinfection and cleaning of the premises before the resumption of public Masses and services.
7. The Parish Response Team will coordinate the recruitment and training of volunteers, conduct ongoing review of the implementation of the SOPs and assist the health authorities in contact listing.

APPENDIX C CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) Dispense all at-risk individuals, those disqualified by the age and number limits imposed by the SOP, as well as anyone feeling sick or experiencing flu-like or respiratory symptoms from the obligation to attend Mass during this phase.</p> <p>b) Encourage those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (seniors 70 years and above or who have underlying health conditions) to stay home. Communion for home bound may still be given – See Appendix E).</p> <p>c) Live-streaming of Masses should be encouraged for the benefit of those who have chosen to stay home or who are prohibited due to the SOP.</p> <p>d) Priests assisting with Masses at different churches, chapels or mass centres, should, as far as possible, observe additional personal hygiene, e.g. shower after each mass, new change of clothing etc.</p> <p>e) Priests, lectors, servers, and sacristans are to wash/sanitise their hands before and after Mass.</p> <p>f) The Priest or any liturgical minister (lector, server, sacristan, hospitality minister, etc) should excuse themselves from duty if they are displaying any flu-like symptom.</p> <p>g) The altar servers is encouraged to be masked during the celebration.</p> <p>h) All other concelebrating priests (which are to be kept to a minimum) are to be masked.</p>	
2.	Presidential prayers	<p>a) To maintain social distancing with altar servers, the Roman Missal is to be placed on a stand near the</p>	

		chair or on the altar, where applicable.	
3.	Singing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Singing provides greater risks of infection as it increases the dispersion of air droplets. b) Congregational singing is discouraged. c) Recommended that there be only one or two cantors with an organist or unaccompanied. d) If there is singing, songs should be limited to one or two verses and kept to a minimum, i.e. entrance, offertory (only if the collection is done during preparation of the gifts), communion. e) Congregations should be catechised to observe silent contemplation during these moments in place of singing. f) If priest wishes to chant the mass, he should restrict himself to those parts set out in the liturgical norms. 	
4.	Processions (Entrance, Offertory, Recessional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Since singing is not encouraged, both the entrance and the recessional processions should be shortened where possible, e.g. from the sacristy. b) Offertory procession should be omitted. 	
5.	Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Baskets or bags should not be passed from hand to hand. b) Collection baskets or boxes should be placed near the exit of the Church and the congregation invited to drop their offerings therein when leaving the church at the end of Mass. c) Making online offerings and donations should be encouraged. 	
6.	Sign of Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The sign of peace may be exchanged by performing a bow of the head. Hugging, kissing, shaking hands or any other form of physical contact should be avoided. 	

7.	Preparation of Gifts	<p>a) The gifts of bread and wine, paten, chalice, cruets, lavabo and ciborium (ciboria) containing hosts are to be placed on the altar or a credence table located next to the altar that is easily accessible to the priest.</p> <p>b) If there is a server, the server places all these items on the altar and then moves away to allow the priest to prepare the gifts and to perform the ablution.</p> <p>c) The ciborium/ciboria must be covered with a cover or pall until time for distribution of Holy Communion to avoid contamination.</p>	
8.	Holy Communion	<p>a) Before Holy Communion is distributed, the priest (or this may be projected) must explain to the congregation that those who do not wish to receive Holy Communion should remain seated and make an act of spiritual communion.</p> <p>b) The Priest should wear a mask before he distributes Holy Communion. If there is another minister assisting him, he too should wear a mask.</p> <p>c) The minister, if any, should receive communion only after the congregation has done so.</p> <p>d) The priest (and minister) should sanitise their hands with hand sanitiser before taking the ciborium (ia).</p> <p>e) A table needs to be placed at the communion point (s), with an open corporal, a bowl of water and a bottle of hand sanitiser.</p> <p>f) The line for communion should maintain social distancing of 1 metre.</p> <p>g) Communion would only be given in one species – consecrated host.</p>	

		<p>h) Communion should be given only on the hand and to be consumed immediately.</p> <p>i) In the event, the priest (or minister) accidentally touches the hand of the communicant, the priest (or minister) must then sanitise his hands with the water and hand sanitiser before continuing with the distribution.</p> <p>j) If a host should drop, the priest (or minister) should place the host on the corporal, and proceed to sanitise his/their hands.</p> <p>k) After Holy Communion has been distributed and before the purification of the vessels, the priest must first sanitise his hands.</p> <p>l) All communion vessels are to be thoroughly and properly cleaned after Mass with hot, soapy water after being purified according to the rubrics.</p>	
9.	Individual blessings	<p>a) Any blessing of children, or individual blessings of parishioners after Mass should be avoided.</p> <p>b) The congregation should be catechised that the blessing at the end of the Mass and before the dismissal would suffice.</p> <p>c) For the blessing of sacramentals, the congregation could be asked to hold these items in their hands during the final blessing.</p>	
10.	Children's Liturgy of the Word	<p>a) All Children's liturgy of the Word should be suspended until further notice.</p>	

APPENDIX D CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) Given the Catholic Church’s norms for confessions, the confessor (priest) must be physically present to the penitent in person and must be able to hear the penitent’s confession without the aid of electronic devices.</p> <p>b) Amplification of natural sound is permitted (e.g. intercom system installed at confessional, or the use of mobile phone although the physical presence mentioned in paragraph a) must be maintained).</p> <p>c) Confessors and penitents are to wear facial masks during confessions.</p> <p>d) Any requests made for confessions outside of the published times before Masses should be done by prior appointment. The person should be asked if he is displaying any flu-like symptoms or respiratory problems.</p>	
2.	Social Distancing	<p>a) A distance of at least 1 metre must be maintained between the confessor and the penitent.</p> <p>b) In the event that there is a queue/line for confession, to limit persons to a maximum of five person at any one time with sufficient social distancing (spots should be marked on the floor).</p>	
3.	Space	<p>a) Confessional – this is to be avoided except before Masses (unless there is another open-air space suitable for this). There should be a protective screen (plastic, glass, plexiglass, etc.) placed on the window of the confessional between the confessor and the penitent. Penitents are instructed to face the door of the confessional</p>	

		<p>instead of the priest. The protective screen, chair and door handle should be cleaned and disinfected after every confession, where this is possible, or at least once at the end of every Mass.</p> <p>b) Open area – a chair for confessor and penitent may be set up in an open-air area (away from the public) with sufficient social distancing.</p> <p>c) Office – this is to be avoided.</p> <p>d) Drive-thru – At the discretion of the priest, he may instruct the penitent to remain in the car as the penitent drives into the drive-way/ porch for confession. The penitent should wind down the front passenger side window for the duration of the confession. Again, the priest should maintain adequate social distancing.</p> <p>e) A large room with good ventilation (without turning on the air-conditioning) could also be used.</p> <p>f) Homes of penitents – For confessions for the homebound, please see Appendix E for more details.</p>	
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APPENDIX E

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) These guidelines are applicable for persons who are not COVID-19 positive, not designated by the health authorities as Persons under Investigation (PUIs) and do not display any related symptoms or have not been in contact with any other person who has been tested positive for COVID-19.</p> <p>b) Before visiting the sick person, the priest (or office staff) should call</p>	

		<p>ahead to determine that the person fulfils the criteria under a).</p> <p>c) The priest should wear a face mask prior to entering the home of the sick person and should not remove the mask until he leaves the house.</p> <p>d) For persons who have been admitted to a hospital, family members should ensure and confirm that the visit of a priest is permitted. If possible, a letter from the doctor should be obtained to allow the priest to make the visit.</p> <p>e) In a home for the aged and elderly, the priest should limit the sacrament to a small group of persons. If there are many, he should then make an arrangement to come on another day. He must also check if the home permits visitors.</p> <p>f) Where it is possible, the priest should limit his visit to only one household/ hospital/ home in a day. In the event, that he has to cover several households or hospitals, it is highly recommended that he should space out the visits (one morning, the second in the afternoon) and observe additional personal hygiene, i.e. shower between the visits, new change of clothes etc.</p>	
2.	Social Distancing	<p>a) During the entire rite of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, including confession, the priest should maintain a distance of 1 metre from the sick person. He should only approach the person at the point of anointing and/or Holy Communion.</p> <p>b) In the event that the priest discovers that the sick person is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, he may at his discretion decline to continue with the prayers and the rite and should explain the reason</p>	

		for doing so – to avoid contracting and transmitting infectious disease.	
3.	Sanitise Hands	a) Before starting, the priest should either wash his hands with soap and water or disinfect it with alcohol-based hand sanitiser.	
4.	Laying on Hands	a) The priest should avoid laying his hands on the head of the sick person. Raising his hands in the direction of the person is permissible.	
5.	Anointing with Oil of the Sick	a) The priest should prepare an unused cotton swab (short stick with cotton wrapped around its end) which should be dipped in the oil of the sick and then approaches the sick person to anoint him/her with the cotton swab and without his fingers touching any part of the body of the sick person. Thereafter, the cotton swab is to be placed in a tissue paper. The priest may either take home the swab wrapped in the tissue paper or instruct the family member to burn the tissue and the cotton swab. b) After anointing, the priest should sanitise his hands again.	
6.	Holy Communion	a) After saying the Lord’s Prayer and “Behold the Lamb of God ...” the priest gives communion to the sick person. After doing so, he should sanitise his hands again. b) On returning home, the Corporal should be washed and dried before reuse. The Pyx should be cleaned with hot, soapy water after being purified according to the rubrics.	
7.	Holy Communion for homebound by Extraordinary Minister of Communion	a) Holy Communion will be administered to the home-bound sick and immediate care-giver at the discretion of the parish priest. b) All precautions stated under the sacrament of anointing of the sick should be similarly observed by the	

		<p>Extraordinary Minister of Communion – e.g. calling ahead to confirm that the sick person does not have symptoms, wearing a face mask, maintain social distancing.</p> <p>c) Should the Extraordinary Minister of Communion discover that the home-bound person is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, he may at his discretion decline to administer communion to the person explaining the reason for doing so to avoid contracting and transmitting infectious disease. He must notify the Parish Priest as soon as possible and return the unconsumed communion to the Church without any further delay.</p> <p>d) On returning home, the Corporal should be washed and dried before reuse. The Pyx should be cleaned with hot, soapy water after being purified according to the rubrics.</p>	
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APPENDIX F CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM/ CONFIRMATION

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) Due to age restrictions imposed under the SOP, infant baptisms would currently not be possible in churches. The priest should exercise pastoral discretion in determining whether baptisms could be administered in emergency life-threatening situations by the parents of the child or make arrangement for him to personally perform the baptism in the home of the family.</p> <p>b) Due to the limits placed on numbers of persons allowed in one gathering, baptisms (both infants and adults) and confirmations are</p>	

		<p>to be performed outside regular weekend Masses.</p> <p>c) Based on the limits placed on persons allowed to be present and the numbers to be baptised/confirmed, the priest would need to consider having several services.</p> <p>d) The number of invited guests would depend on the number of persons receiving the sacrament(s), limits posed by the health authorities.</p>	
2.	Social Distancing	<p>a) To ensure that there is adequate social distancing (at least 1 metre apart from each other), the number of persons involved in the rite should be limited so as not to crowd the space near the baptismal font or in front of the sanctuary or in the home.</p>	
3.	Baptism of Infants	<p>a) The number of invitees per family would depend on the number of infants to be baptised.</p> <p>b) Live streaming or video recording of the rite is encouraged to allow others who could not be included in the ceremony to follow the proceedings.</p> <p>c) The priest and any other assisting minister (sacristan or server) should wear a mask. Parents, sponsors and invited guests should also wear masks.</p> <p>d) If baptism takes place in the home, the priest must be masked upon entering the house and should not remove the mask until he leaves the house.</p> <p>e) For the rites at the entrance of the Church, this can either be omitted or if performed, it should be done with sufficient social distancing. The last part of the rite at the entrance which involves signing the child with a sign of the cross should be omitted as this would involve touching the child. In place</p>	

		<p>of it, the priest could bless the child by making a sign of the cross in the form of a benediction and allow the parents of the child to sign the forehead of the child with the cross. The sponsor(s) should refrain from touching the child.</p> <p>f) Baptism should be administered by pouring holy water over the forehead of the child. Baptism by immersion is to be avoided.</p> <p>g) For anointing with the oil of catechumen and oil of chrism, an unused cotton swab is to be used for each oil. The used cotton swab is not to be reused for other children. The priest is to ensure that only the cotton swab touches the head/skin of the child. He is to avoid touching with his own fingers.</p> <p>h) The priest should sanitise his hands each time before he anoints each child.</p> <p>i) The priest should excuse himself from having to pose in family photographs unless he can maintain a safe distance.</p>	
4.	Sacraments of Initiation for Adults (RCIA)	<p>a) The number of candidates to receive the sacraments and the invited guest lists should be determined by the parish priest based on the limits imposed SOP.</p> <p>b) Live streaming or video recording of the rite is encouraged to allow others who could not be included in the ceremony to follow the proceedings.</p> <p>c) The priest (during the Rite of Baptism and Confirmation), assisting ministers (altar servers, RCIA facilitators), candidates and sponsors should wear masks.</p> <p>d) Laying of Hands – instead of individual laying on of hands, the priest may extend his hands in direction of the candidates.</p>	

		<p>e) Anointing with Sacred Chrism – an unused cotton swab is to be used for each candidate. No cotton swab is to be reused for another person. The priest is to ensure that his fingers do not touch the forehead of the candidate. If the priest should touch the skin of the candidate, he is to sanitise his hands before proceeding to the next candidate.</p> <p>f) The procedure for Holy Communion under Appendix C is to be observed. Communion will only be given in one species.</p>	
5.	Confirmation	<p>a) As there is a great likelihood that confirmation Masses would be multiplied due to the restrictions imposed by the authorities, the Bishop could delegate the faculty to confer confirmations on all parish priests or their assistants or resident priests, where applicable.</p> <p>b) Confirmation Masses should be organised outside normal weekend Masses for the public.</p> <p>c) The number of invited guests would depend on the number of candidates and limits imposed by the authorities.</p> <p>d) Live streaming or video recording of the rite is encouraged to allow others who could not be included in the ceremony to follow the proceedings.</p> <p>e) The priest (during the Rite of Confirmation), assisting ministers (altar servers, catechists), candidates and sponsors should wear masks.</p> <p>f) Laying of Hands – instead of individual laying on of hands, the priest may extend his hands in the direction of the candidates.</p> <p>g) Anointing for confirmation – an unused cotton swab is to be used for each candidate. No cotton</p>	

		<p>swab is to be reused for another person. The priest is to ensure that his fingers do not touch the forehead of the candidate. If the priest should touch the skin of the candidate, he is to sanitise his hands before proceeding to the next candidate.</p> <p>h) The procedure for Holy Communion under Appendix C is to be observed. Communion will only be given in one species – consecrated host.</p>	
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APPENDIX G CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	The priest should have a discussion with the couple to explain and obtain their commitment to comply with requirements of the SOP and guidelines here	
2.	Catholic Marriage Preparation Course	<p>a) Parishes, if they have the ability to do so, should conduct the CMPC via online platforms.</p> <p>b) They could seek assistance from presenters in neighbouring parishes or from the Diocesan team, if these are available.</p> <p>c) Priests could also prepare the couples preparing for marriage themselves.</p>	
3.	Prenuptial Enquiry	a) The priest should conduct the prenuptial enquiry. The priest should observe adequate safety measures during the enquiry e.g. conduct online interviews; wear masks during face-to-face interviews; observe social distancing during face-to-face interviews.	

4.	Guest List	<p>a) The number of family members, invited guests, photographers should take into account the limits imposed by the health authorities. The liturgical ministers and two witnesses for the wedding should be included in the list.</p> <p>b) Live streaming or video recording of the rite is encouraged to allow others who could not be included in the ceremony to follow the proceedings.</p>	
5.	Bridal/ Entrance Procession	<p>a) The bridal / entrance procession may be omitted at the discretion of the priest. In the event that this is omitted, both the bride and bridegroom are to be seated in their designated places in the front of the sanctuary at the start of the Mass.</p> <p>b) If the bridal procession is allowed, there should be no bridesmaid, flower girls or page boys.</p>	
6.	Seating for Bride and Bridegroom	<p>The Bride and Bridegroom may be seated together but a safe distance should be kept from the priest. It is recommended that their seats be not placed on the sanctuary.</p>	
7.	Rite of Marriage	<p>a) The priest should maintain a distance of at least 1 metre from the couple. There is no need for the priest to approach the couple during the rite. It is recommended that the priest remains in the sanctuary.</p> <p>b) A microphone may be given to the couple to make the necessary responses and to read their vows. This microphone should not be shared with the priest.</p> <p>c) The witnesses should maintain at a distance of 1 metre from each other and from the couple. Prior markings of the floor could be made to ensure a safe distance.</p> <p>d) The rings (or thali), which are to be placed on a tray, is to be brought</p>	

		forward to the priest by the altar server for blessing. Once blessed, the altar server will bring the rings to the couple for the exchange. It is recommended that the altar server wears a mask at this stage and sanitises his hands before and after using the tray.	
8.	Holy Communion (if applicable)	<p>a) Holy Communion is only confined to a Nuptial Mass. It is to be discouraged in the case of a service (mixed religion/ disparity of cult) but the priest has the prerogative to allow Holy Communion following the Diocesan norms.</p> <p>b) If there is Holy Communion, the procedure for Holy Communion under Appendix C is to be observed. Communion will only be given in one species – consecrated host.</p>	
9.	Signing of Marriage Register	<p>a) A bottle of hand sanitiser is to be placed on the table and used by all parties who will be signing the register.</p> <p>b) Each person should sanitise their hands before signing the register. They should also sanitise their hands after affixing their signature to the register.</p> <p>c) All persons should maintain social distance.</p>	
10.	Photographs	<p>a) The priest should excuse himself from a group photograph with the couple or the family unless he is able to maintain social distance.</p> <p>b) The couple should also be advised to confined group photos to immediate family members and witnesses. They should refrain from having group photographs with other guests.</p>	
11.	Wedding Reception	<p>a) There should be no wedding reception and fellowship after the Nuptial Mass or service on the church premises.</p>	

APPENDIX H CELEBRATION OF FUNERALS

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) Funerals in the Church are only available for persons who have not died from COVID-19.</p> <p>b) In the case of COVID-19 deaths, additional protocols from the health authorities must be observed. Please go to this link: https://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/2019-ncov-wuhan-guidelines. (reference to Annexe 20, part C)</p> <p>c) In the case of COVID 19 deaths, where a funeral service or Mass is not allowed, the priest can offer to do a memorial service or Mass for the deceased, in the absence of the body.</p>	
2.	Vigil (Wake) at home or funeral parlour	<p>a) Rules of social distancing applies.</p> <p>b) If a priest is present to conduct the service at this first station, he is to be masked while at the premises.</p> <p>c) A bottle of hand sanitiser should be placed next to the bowl of holy water. For all those who will be sprinkling holy water on the coffin of the deceased, they are to sanitise their hands before and after the sprinkling.</p> <p>d) The BEC should also be informed of the rules of social distancing and limits placed on the number of people allowed at a gathering. It is recommended that only a few representatives of the BECs be present for the memorial prayers.</p> <p>e) Instead of performing the seven days prayers at the home/ parlour, the members of the BEC can perform the prayers in their own respective homes. The family of the deceased may continue the memorial prayers by themselves.</p> <p>f) It is recommended that all guests and visitors should wear masks.</p> <p>g) There should also be registration of visitors for the purpose of contact listing.</p>	
3.	Funeral Mass	<p>a) The preparatory rites at the entrance of the church may be omitted if there is no way of ensuring social distancing.</p>	

		<p>b) The family members of the deceased, relatives and guests should already be seated at the start of the Mass.</p> <p>c) The family should be informed of the limitations imposed by health authorities on the number of people allowed at a gathering.</p> <p>d) Live streaming or video recording of the rite is encouraged to allow others who could not be included in the ceremony to follow the proceedings.</p> <p>e) The coffin should be brought in by the undertakers.</p> <p>f) All other guidelines for the Celebration of the Eucharist under Appendix C should apply.</p>	
4.	Rite of Committal (Burial or Cremation)	a) The priest or minister, if present, should be masked and rules of social distancing should be observed. All other requirements of the SOP should be complied with.	

APPENDIX I CATECHISM CLASSES, RCIA, FORMATIONS, MEETINGS

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) As a general rule, all non-liturgical gatherings should be suspended until further notice.</p> <p>b) Under the current SOP, all other gatherings or activities apart from the approved Masses are not permitted.</p>	
2.	Digital platforms	<p>a) The priest must hold discussions with the various councils, ministries, and committees in the parish to find new ways of connecting, teaching, and meeting using digital platforms.</p> <p>b) Digital platforms should be secure to avoid hacking and abuse by online predators.</p> <p>c) Parishioners and members of the different groups need to be reminded that although public</p>	

		<p>safety restrictions do not allow face-to-face meetings or classes, the life of the parish can and should continue.</p> <p>d) The RCIA may begin promotion of its new journey and begin online classes, if the presenting team is ready to commence.</p>	
3.	<p>Physical face-face meetings (In the event these are permitted under future SOPs)</p>	<p>a) Online booking of room by Ministry Chief Coordinator.</p> <p>b) Maximum number of seats in each room to be determined by Parish Response Team.</p> <p>c) Markings for physical distance.</p> <p>d) Log of persons using room.</p> <p>e) Wear Mask, use Hand sanitiser.</p> <p>f) No physical contact.</p> <p>g) Use online methods for references.</p> <p>h) Avoid sharing hardcopy (notes, minutes, PowerPoint handouts).</p> <p>i) Achieve good cross-ventilation during meeting.</p> <p>j) Where possible, open doors, windows, use fans.</p> <p>k) Maximum duration of session- 30 minutes.</p> <p>l) No eating, drinking in room.</p> <p>m) For room cleaning procedure, personal protective equipment should be worn.</p> <p>n) Hazard waste disposal of cleaning material.</p> <p>o) There should be inspection by the Parish Response Team or a representative after every use.</p>	

APPENDIX J NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH – BECS

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	a) In 1976, the Catholic Church in Peninsular Malaysia initiated a renewal of the local church in line	

		<p>with the vision and reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The core priority of this renewal would be the creation and formation of Christ-centred small communities, later known as “Basic Ecclesial Communities.”</p> <p>b) Although the current restrictions on gatherings pose real challenges to the way BECs traditionally meet and organise themselves, the obstacles are not insurmountable.</p> <p>c) BECs are called to explore creative ways of connecting, promoting growth in faith and a communitarian spirituality.</p> <p>d) BECs should continue to avoid all physical gatherings, as it would be harder to maintain social distance and observe precautionary public safety measures (disinfection, temperature scanning) within an enclosed space.</p> <p>e) We must take special care to protect the vulnerable and the elderly. Social distancing is not only necessary for our own safety but an expression of the great commandment of love.</p>	
2.	New Ways of Connecting and Supporting the Community	<p>a) BECs should adopt, if feasible, a digital platform to connect. Although, the digital platform cannot be an adequate substitute for physical face-to-face presence, it is a safe and viable platform during a time of social distancing.</p> <p>b) The Parish may provide on-line training and suggestions for online resources to assist BECs to make the transition to a digital platform.</p> <p>c) We need to recognise that there are many members who would not have the resources or ability to connect via a digital platform. Other ways of connecting should be explored, e.g. telephone calls, leaving messages at the gates of</p>	

		<p>the homes of the elderly, paying a visit while maintaining a safe distance (from the gate).</p> <p>d) It is important to note that the most vulnerable in the community, especially the elderly, would have a greater need for community support especially during a time of social distancing.</p> <p>e) The BEC members could offer to do grocery shopping for the elderly and home-bound.</p> <p>f) The BEC should continue to identify families and individuals, especially families hit by the economic downturn, migrants, and offer assistance. They should collaborate with the Parish Integral Human Development Ministry.</p> <p>g) BEC coordinators should faithfully disseminate information, online BEC reflection sheets and any other resources or information which has been shared by the parish or Diocese.</p> <p>h) The BEC should encourage members to assign a fixed time for community prayer – rosary, Lectio Divina, Divine Office, Divine mercy chaplet, intercessory prayer, participate in live streamed Masses to show solidarity with each other in prayer.</p>	
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APPENDIX K GUIDELINES FOR VISIT TO PARISH OFFICE

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>a) As a general rule, all transactions and dealings with the parish staff or the priest should be done via telephone call or email.</p> <p>b) In the event, the matter requires a face-to-face meeting, prior</p>	

		<p>appointment should be made with the parish staff or priest.</p> <p>c) The gates of the Church should remain closed and would only be opened to those who have a prior appointment.</p>	
2.	Things to consider before arriving at the parish office	<p>a) Visitor must ensure that he/she is not displaying any flu-like symptoms. Visitor must wear a face mask at all times within the Church premises.</p> <p>b) Visitor must maintain social distance of at least 1 metre.</p> <p>c) Visitor must undergo temperature scan by security or staff.</p> <p>d) Visitor must provide contact details for the purpose of contact tracing.</p> <p>e) Visitor must sanitise hands at the registration desk.</p> <p>f) Visitor is advised to bring own pen.</p> <p>g) Visitor is encouraged to make online payment. In the event it involves cash, the visitor must bring the exact change.</p>	
3.	Things to do at the parish office	<p>a) Lines should be drawn on the floor to mark a safe distance from the counter/window of the office or table set up for this purpose.</p> <p>b) If there is a need to complete and sign a form, the visitor should sanitise hands before and after completing the form. He/she should use his/her own pen.</p>	

APPENDIX L

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARISH RESPONSE TEAM (PRT)

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	a) The Parish Response Team is to be set up by the Parish Priest to assist him in reviewing Parish SOPs related to public health safety in the parish, provide contact listing	

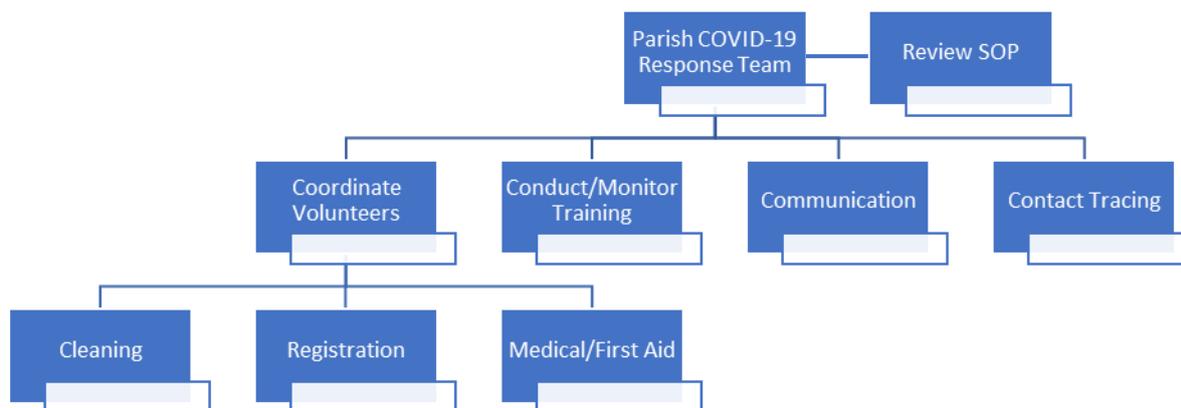
		<p>should there be a positive case of COVID-19 or someone identified as a Person Under Investigation (PUI), advised him on making media responses to parishioners and the public, assist in coordinating and developing training programmes for volunteers, staff and parishioners.</p> <p>b) Suggested members: Parish Priest, Parish Pastoral Council Chairman, a doctor, Social Communications Ministry Head, Maintenance Head, a lawyer.</p>	
2.	Contact Listing	<p>a) COVID-19 is a notifiable disease (Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 342, 1988). Borang Annex 2, 'NOTIFIKASI PENYAKIT BERJANGKIT YANG PERLU DILAPORKAN'. To be filled in by any Medical Doctor who diagnoses a person with suspected COVID-19 infection – a 'Person Under Investigation' [PUI].</p> <p>b) When COVID-19 Diagnosis is confirmed, a PUI becomes a confirmed case of COVID-19. Public Health Department (Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri) will perform contact tracing with confirmed cases of COVID-19.</p> <p>c) The Parish Response Team shall initiate contact listing of persons who may have come into close contact with PUI by an interview which may be conducted via telephone. Parish Response Team shall inform PUI, obtain verbal consent that such information is requested in conformance with Health Regulations, and will be kept confidential.</p> <p>d) CONTACT LISTING should include: name, age, gender, MyKad no., address, mobile no. One should also compile names and mobile</p>	

		<p>nos. of persons who have had close contact with PUI.</p> <p>e) The Parish Response Team will compile a summary of contact listing information and notify the Public Health Department.</p> <p>f) The Parish Response Team will summarise contact information and notify the Chancery.</p> <p>g) In the event the Parish Response Team is short of resources, it can approach neighbouring parishes.</p> <p>h) Where possible, the Parish Response Team could also obtain the following information to assist the health authorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. PUI family members with cough flu fever symptoms and duration. ii. Date, time, duration of visit to church. iii. Activity during church visit, Ministry served. iv. All places PUI attended in church. v. PUI seating position during Mass. vi. Identity or description of persons in close proximity or physical contact with PUI, if known. 	
3.	Communications	<p>a) The Parish Response Team should assist the Parish Priest in the dissemination of timely, accurate information about COVID-19 to all parishioners and the public.</p> <p>b) The Parish Response Team has a duty to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of information about identity of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and PUI.</p> <p>c) Under the Medical Act 1971, and the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) Code of Professional Conduct 1986, a doctor is duty bound to maintain confidentiality</p>	

		<p>of a patient. While the non-medical public are not bound by the Medical Act and its Regulations, the Parish Response Team shall adhere to the standards issued by the Ministry of Health, and is unable to release the names of those involved.</p> <p>d) In the interests of public health prevention and control of infectious diseases, the Diocese and Parish Response Team recognise a social need and moral obligation to notify and inform persons who may have come into close contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19 and PUI, without divulging the identity of the persons.</p> <p>e) The Parish Response Team will also disseminate Chancery Notices, Guidelines from the Diocese or the Catholic Bishops Conference, Ministry of Health notices, verified health information to Parish Ministries and BECs, as and when needed.</p> <p>f) The Parish Response Team will determine parish procedures for receiving and responding to parishioner enquiries.</p> <p>g) The Parish Response Team should consult the Diocese and seek advice on issuing social media statements and responding to enquiries.</p> <p>h) Media questions addressed to a Parish will be assessed by the Parish Response Team. PRT will draft a response if it is able to do so and forward the draft to the Diocese for coordination and final response.</p> <p>i) Diocese will handle communications and issue statements to Media.</p>	
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		j) Parishioners and the Parish Response Team should exercise caution when approached by Media organisations to make statements. All enquiries should be in written format and should be submitted to the Diocese for its further action.	
4.	Review of SOPs	a) The Parish Response Team is responsible for reviewing the SOPs that have been established in the parish, have oversight over its implementation and make recommendations to the Parish Priest for improvement.	
5.	Undertake training and on-going education	a) The Parish Response Team should develop modules for training staff and volunteers in the implementation of the SOPs. b) The Team should also provide on-going education for parishioners in the form of power point slides, posters, infographics, FAQ sheets.	
6.	Appointment of Coordinators	a) Coordinators should be appointed to oversee the different teams of volunteers – cleaning, registration, medical staff, etc. b) The Parish Response Team should have regular review meetings with the Coordinators to gather feedback and provide reports to the Parish Priest.	
7.	Provide reports to the Parish Priest	a) The Review should include a progress report of implementation, challenges and difficulties encountered, suggestions for improvement (if any) and should cover these areas: i. Cleaning. ii. Temperature check and registration. iii. Liturgy. iv. Medical support.	

THE ROLE OF THE PARISH RESPONSE TEAM



APPENDIX M

CONTACT RECORDING AND TRACING

	AREA	SUGGESTION	YOUR PLANS
1.	GENERAL PROVISIONS	a) As per the SOP issued by the Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN), all Churches / Chapels that will be open to the public must now display the MySejahtera APP QR Code at all entrances. b) For those without smartphones, physical registration is required.	
2.	Requirements for Contact registration and tracing	The Diocese of Penang is requesting all Churches / Chapels that will be open to the public to have the following: a) Display the MySejahtera APP QR Code; b) Visitor's registration Book to record all visitors. The Visitors Book should have the following columns: name, contact details, temperature reading, time of visit, places visited in the Church/chapel compound; c) Parish QR Code for 'visitors' to scan before leaving the Church/Chapel premises.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items a & b are requirements set by the Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN); 	
3.	Process of Registration	<p>a) Upon arrival at the Church / Premise, the “visitor” will be required to scan the MySejahtera QR Code either by using the App or completing the form that will be displayed on the smartphone upon scanning.</p> <p>b) The visitor will also need to record in the Visitors Book the following: name, telephone number, time of visit, and body temperature (kindly provide hand sanitiser at the recording desk).</p>	