

Safeguarding Guidance for Church Stewards

In the document *Guidance on Re-Opening of Catholic Churches for Individual Prayer*, there is a section on the stewards that will be required to assist in the supervision of people in the church building when open. The *Guidance* reads:

Assembling a team of stewards to ensure that the guidance in this document can safely be put into effect. The number of volunteers required will vary depending on the size of churches, but priests will not be able to manage the re-opening of churches on their own. It is important that those in the team should not be drawn from those instructed to shield themselves, nor, as a general rule, from groups considered more vulnerable to coronavirus.

Additional guidance is now presented to ensure that good practice is maintained at this time. For other practical information, see the section in the *Guidance* entitled **Opening and operating safely: hand hygiene, cleaning and social distancing**. The information is repeated here for ease:

- At least two stewards must be present in the church throughout the time it is open for prayer; the stewards must ensure that hand sanitisation occurs at entry and exit points, social distancing is maintained by people in the church and if a pre-determined capacity is reached, they prevent others from entering the church. (Through, for example, a “one in, one out” policy.) People with cold or flu-like symptoms should be asked not to enter.
- Stewards themselves should practice good hand hygiene through either regular hand washing or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser. They should not eat or drink or touch their face unless they have immediately washed their hands beforehand and should maintain social distance within the church. They should ensure any cuts or grazes on their hands are completely covered with waterproof dressings. They should not physically assist people unless absolutely necessary, for example in an emergency for first aid.
- One of the stewards could be the Parish Priest himself; stewards should be already known to the parish priest and be current volunteers in the parish.
- Where possible, ensure one of each pair is trained in safeguarding for another role in the parish community.
- Parish priests should keep a rota of who was on duty at any given time, and also that the names and contact details of stewards are kept in the parish office with this rota.
- Ensure the Diocesan Safeguarding Posters are clearly visible in the church, that they have up to date contact details on them, and the stewards know about them so they can provide these details of the local Safeguarding Office to anybody who appears to be concerned for themselves or another person.
- It is not advisable for a person under 16 years to enter a church building at this time without being accompanied by an adult.

Please contact your local Diocesan Safeguarding Office for any additional information or advice.

Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas
8th June 2020