

# COVID-19 Update on Attending St Aidan's

## **Government Changes in the COVID Rules from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

1. Fully vaccinated people and those under 18 will no longer have to self-isolate if they are 'pinged' when having had contact with someone with Coronavirus. Instead, they are 'advised' to take a full PCR test (not lateral flow test) to see if they have Coronavirus;
2. Everyone who tests positive will still need to self-isolate regardless of age or vaccination status;
3. People who have not been fully vaccinated or who are not under 18 must still self-isolate if they are 'pinged';
4. People who have had both vaccinations can still get infected (50% upon contact) and the government, therefore, is 'advising' them to consider wearing a mask in enclosed spaces and limiting contact with other people;
5. Of course, anyone with Coronavirus symptoms must immediately self-isolate and get a full PCR test (not lateral flow test) and remain in isolation until the result comes back.

## **How these changes will inform attendance at St Aidan's**

If you are fully vaccinated or are under 18 and are 'pinged' by the NHS app as having had contact with someone with Coronavirus then you can come to Church while waiting for your PCR test result.

***However, in those circumstances, please do consider whether it would be wise to come to Church until you get a negative test result.*** You may only miss one Sunday (if you are negative) but doing that might just save someone's life or the misery of Long COVID.

As you can see from this explanation, the new rules do not affect us at St Aidan's at all, provided people remain vigilant and care for one another, as we always do.

## What about the future?

Some of you may be wondering what the circumstances are that would allow us to go back to our Church practices before the pandemic. As I see it now, the following seems to make sense:

- Hospitalisations, deaths, and the situation with Long Covid cease to be serious dangers to public health. We need to put some numbers on this, however!
- As to hospitalisations and deaths, I think we need to see these coming right down to what we might expect to see with other vaccine-controlled illnesses such as flu.
- This would suggest sustained low rates of less than 700 daily hospitalisations and less than 70 daily deaths from Coronavirus. “Sustained” means over at least a month. These figures are based on flu statistics for a tolerated, mild year’s outbreak.
- As to Long Covid, we would need to see the NHS really addressing this issue such that people could return to a more normal life as soon as possible after “recovering” from infection.
- ***No changes whatsoever will be made to what we do at St Aidan’s unless these conditions are met AND you are comfortable with any easing of restrictions we might make.***
- We need to keep up our guard in case new variants of this Coronavirus prove to be more lethal, in which case St Aidan’s will respond promptly, as always, in order to keep us all safe.

*Fr Gregory*

*12<sup>th</sup> August 2021*