

COVID-19 Datasheet – Appendix 3 (H&S Considerations)

The Coronavirus pandemic (2020)

In 2020 the Coronavirus virus appeared and spread to the United Kingdom, where it was classed as a pandemic on 5th March 2020. Following advice from the Government the church closed its services on 17th March 2020. On the 23rd June 2020 the Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed that places of worship could reopen on 4th July 2020 with certain restrictions and mitigations in place. The specific guidance for places of worship was updated on the Government website on 29th June 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>.

This **COVID-19 Datasheet** has been produced to demonstrate duty of care by the church, and to communicate the churches response to the government advice to members, friends, and visitors giving clarity on how the church complies with the Government’s guidelines.

Definition - Please note the Government Definition (emphasis added).

“A place of worship refers to a **building** used for regular religious ceremonies, communal worship or similar gatherings by religious organisations. It includes the use of **surrounding grounds, for example, adjoining carparks, courtyards or gardens** for which the venue managers are also responsible.”

There follows a **step-by-step** explanation of how we have introduced measures to minimize the risk spread of infection. We would ask people attending the services to both observe and comply with these as they worship together.

Communication and Social Distancing - On entering the church grounds at the gate and the main door, people will see signage for COVID-19 guidance. There will be 2m socially distanced floor markings outside the main entrance to allow people to queue. This factsheet will already have been explained to usual attenders, and will be explained to any visitors who enter.

Entrance / Exit’s –People will enter the building at the main entrance and will leave by the Fire exit on the left next to the study (this is to stop a pinch-point at the inner door). Once you enter the main room, other than for toilet use please do not go back into the entrance room. The doorman will remind you of this.

Hand Sanitising – On entering the building, **before using the toilets**, and on exiting the building you are required to sanitize your hands.

Toilet Facilities – After you have sanitized your hands on entering the building, you may use the toilet facilities. After toilet use, please wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use the provided paper towels for drying your hands and place in the bin provided. This approach means people can make themselves comfortable before the services. If you need the toilet once the services have started, you may use them whilst ensuring you keep your 2m social distance from others (**please sanitize your hands before entering**) **Please however, wait at the door and get the attention of the doorman so that people coming in do not make contact with you exiting.**

Personal items– Due to the need to remove pinch points, we ask that people take their coats, and all personal items into the main meeting room. The area for coats and bags (normal use) will be used for other items at this COVID-19 time.

Drinking water - Should you need some water, please use the plastic disposable cups outside the toilets, and dispose of the cups in the bins provided.

Hymn Books and Bibles – Please bring your own Hymn Book to services which alleviates the risk of transmission. If friends or visitors arrive without a Hymn Book, we will have spares in plastic bags for their use. These will be quarantined between services to enable use at the next service.

Visitors temporary record – we are asked to help with the NHS Test and Trace service by keeping an accurate temporary record of visitors for 21 days. Visitor “slips” will be held by the doorman and these can be completed by the doorman in conversation with the visitor to comply with this requirement. **The visitors book will not be in operation during COVID-19.**

Capacity and Seating – The seating arrangement has been placed to enable the maximum number of people to sit in the main room whilst maintaining social distancing of 2m. When you make your way into the main room, those seats that you **can sit on** will be marked with a **Green Tick**. We are operating an “every other bench” policy and those benches where people are not to sit will be taped over to restrict access. Please remember to exit the main room using the Fire Exit. Families can of course sit together at the Green Tick.

Ventilation– The windows will be open to maximize ventilation. In hot weather (as normal practice) we will open doors as appropriate. We must keep some ventilation open so we advise people to come prepared with warm clothing as we would not wish people to be cold or uncomfortable. **A couple of windows per side should achieve reasonable air-flow so we do not need to open them all.**

Cleaning - The church members will arrange cleaning of the premises weekly and also between meetings. This will include all surfaces, especially those most frequently touched such as door handles and rails.

Creche facilities – The youth building can only be used by one family and the same measures apply.

Physical contact – Due to the need to socially distance we ask that people refrain from hand-shaking, kissing, hugging, or any physical contact during this COVID-19 period.

Please see the following Government guidance for your consideration

Any **visitors to confirm** they do not meet the **Stay at Home** criteria
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

We recommend you read and understand the **Vulnerables persons** guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>