

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH – GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CHURCH OPENING

OCTOBER 2020 (Version approved by PCC on 21 September 2020, further amended following PCC meeting on 19 October 2020)

Guidance on face coverings (as from 8 August 2020)

Extracts from CofE Guidance issued 7 August 2020

Face coverings are currently mandatory on public transport and in a range of indoor venues including places of worship and church halls. While there are exemptions, outlined below, **this is a legal requirement**.

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes:

- Those who are leading services or events in a place of worship, and those who assist them (for instance by reading, preaching, or leading prayer) do not always need to wear a face covering, although one should be worn especially if physical distancing cannot be maintained (i.e. distributing consumables). This exemption does not apply to worshippers, who should wear face coverings consistent with the requirements for any other public space.
- These exemptions will also cover the bride and groom at a wedding and those officiating at the wedding.
- These exemptions are made to enable communication, particularly with those who rely on lip-reading, facial expressions or clear sound; they do not exempt clergy and other leaders from wearing face coverings in other situations or during other activities.

Face coverings should be worn by the president and anyone assisting at the time of distribution of the consecrated bread. Face coverings need not be worn by worshippers when they consume the consecrated bread.

Each communicant should extend their hands to receive Holy Communion, with face covering in place. They should then lower or unloop the face covering, consume the consecrated bread, and then replace the face covering before moving back to their place in the congregation.

Young children under the age of 11 do not need to wear face coverings

Guidance for wardens/stewards when Church open for private prayer

- Wardens/stewards to be at Church 15 mins before session
- Notice to remind people that if they have any coronavirus symptoms, they should not enter
- North and south doors to be kept open [if weather permits (but revised CoE guidance states "It is not necessary to keep external doors open for added ventilation where this causes discomfort over the colder months where existing Covid-safe practice ensures physical distancing of 2m and the use of face coverings for example.")] Clean door handles regularly if they are being used] – *wording in square brackets added following PCC meeting on 19/10/20*
- Kitchen screen to be kept closed

- Two stewards to be on duty
- People asked to use hand sanitizer on entry and exit (stewards to keep an eye on supplies and notify wardens if more needs to be purchased)
- Stewards to remind people of need to wear face coverings
- People to be asked to sit in pews without cushions
- Stewards to clean pews after people have been sitting there
- Stewards need to follow the rules as well (e.g. not touching things unnecessarily)
- One-way system in operation
- Votive candle to be lit at start and extinguished at end
- Wardens to be responsible for checking and closing up Church after session (but leaving kitchen screen open)

Guidance for wardens/stewards when Church open for a service

- Wardens/stewards to be at Church 30 mins before service
- Check placement of pew cushions
- Check supplies of contact details forms (see further below) and check that pens etc in pews
- Notice to remind people that if they have any coronavirus symptoms, they should not enter, those who have been advised to shield are recommended not to attend service, and that those over 70 are at increased risk from COVID-19 and should take particular care if they choose to attend
- North and south doors to be kept open [if weather permits (but revised CoE guidance states “It is not necessary to keep external doors open for added ventilation where this causes discomfort over the colder months where existing Covid-safe practice ensures physical distancing of 2m and the use of face coverings for example.”). Clean door handles regularly if they are being used] – *wording in square brackets added following PCC meeting on 19/10/20*
- Kitchen screen to be unlocked
- Toilet to be available – check supply of soap and toilet roll, check it is clean
- Four stewards to be on duty for Sunday 10am service, two stewards for Sunday 8am service and Wednesday 10am service
- At 10am Sunday service,
 - One steward to manage entrance queue (direct people to queue westwards from North door, maintaining 2m distance) and check that people are using hand sanitizer on entry
 - Two stewards to be inside, directing people to seats and monitoring numbers generally (and making sure they don’t pick up hymn books or prayer books etc.)
 - One steward to monitor use of toilet (ensuring one person at a time goes through kitchen to use toilet, no one else goes through screen until first user has come out) and clean after each visit
 - One steward to manage South door and direct people to enter via North door
- Contingency plan in case of large numbers is to ask people to stand or sit at the back on green carpet area, using wooden chairs and maintaining 2m distance, or ultimately to refuse entry
- People asked to use hand sanitizer on entry and exit
- People to be asked to sit in pews without cushions

- Stewards to keep an eye out to ensure that people don't go into areas they shouldn't
- Stewards to clean pews after service
- Stewards need to follow the rules as well (e.g. not touching things unnecessarily)
- One-way system in operation
- For the moment, no cash collection (put money in donations box)
- If Communion service, stewards to direct congregation at administration of Communion in line with celebrant's instructions
- At end of service, steward to collect the plastic box with contact details forms, seal with lid and place in Parish office
- One steward to remove waste bags and take them home for disposal
- Wardens to be responsible for checking and closing up Church after service (but leaving kitchen screen open)

Guidance for Clergy

- Clergy to issue reminder at start of each service that people should
 - follow stewards' directions
 - have any conversations with friends outside the building
 - not raise their voice for responses
 - take away their own service sheets
 - place any completed contact details forms in plastic box in South Porch at end of service
 - if attending with children, supervise them and ensure they do not run around (unfortunately the kitchen area is not available to use as creche, and only a limited selection of books is available)
- If Communion service, clergy should follow guidance in CofE leaflet (COVID-19 Advice on the administration of Holy Communion) re. handling wafers and consecration and distribution etc. (including checking that hand sanitizer is on credence table)
- At distribution, clergy to give instructions as to how people should come forward one at a time (maintaining 2m distance) to receive bread standing up and how bread will be dropped into their hands
- Notices – no cash collection so please use other means to give such as text

Guidance for Organist

- Organist to clean keyboard and stops if the organ is going to be used again within 72 hours

Guidance for singing (following Guidance issued 19 Aug 2020)

- Single cantor or small groups of singers / small choir can sing during a service, provided 2m distance is kept between singers not from same household.
- Singers to be placed in Chancel behind Rood Screen, singing in a straight line or wide semi-circle and not opposite each other (unless from same household) and so as to maintain a distance of at least 5m from clergy and congregation.
- Singers can remove face coverings for the duration of their singing.

[See also Choir protocol prepared by Robert Stokely]

Guidance for Cleaning team

- Rota is being set up for regular cleaning
- Ensure those on rota are not in vulnerable group or self-isolating
- Cleaning sessions to take place outside the time when Church is open for private prayer
- Cleaning team to follow all other applicable guidance as above (use hand sanitiser, maintain 2m distance etc)
- Gloves and cleaning materials to be provided
- Cleaning team to be responsible for removing waste after they have finished
- Cleaning team to consult CofE guidance on cleaning
- Pay particular attention to objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, and to busy areas.

Guidance for Flower Arrangers

(From Claire Conquest)

Procedures for flower arranging whilst under social distancing measures:

- 1) Only one person to arrange flowers at any one time.
- 2) Flowers to be arranged between 10am and 11 on Friday mornings [RS note – this is to avoid overlap with Church being open for private prayer. Jenny K has another commitment for this time and will need access at another time].
- 3) Hands should be sanitised on entry to the church and face masks should be worn.
- 4) The pedestal will be beside the entrance into the chancel.
- 5) Oasis to be brought to church pre-soaked. Additional water can be obtained from kitchen.
- 6) All flowers and greenery to be bought in to church, and all rubbish, cuttings and old flowers to be taken home and disposed of.
- 7) The use of tools from the cupboard is permitted but only during the designated flower arranging time. The cupboard should remain closed at all other times.
- 8) Arranger should limit their movement around the Church and follow the guidance of the stewards.
- 9) Claims for oasis, flowers etc should be made in the usual way.

Guidance for Bellringers

(From Nick Hughes) – approved by Vicar and Wardens

Bellringing Procedures

On Sunday morning:

1. Keeping 2 metres apart 4 ringers, each wearing a face mask will assemble outside the tower door at 9.30am.
2. The ringers will keep face masks on at all times.
3. The tower door handle and key hole are wiped with sanitiser and the door unlocked.
4. The ringers all apply hand sanitiser.
5. Keeping 2 metres apart the 4 ringers will ascend the spiral staircase with the last ringer locking the door behind them.
6. The ringers enter the ringing chamber and are each allocated a bell. Bells 1, 3, 5 and 7 only will be rung and so social distance will be maintained.
7. The windows in the ringing chamber will be opened by the ringer who opened the tower door.
8. Each ringer will apply hand sanitiser.
9. Only the allocated ringer shall touch their allocated bell rope.
10. The bells will be rung for 15 minutes which includes ringing up and down.
11. The ringer who opened the windows will close them.
12. The ringer who locked the door will do down the stairs first to unlock the door followed by the other 3 ringers.
13. The ringer who closed the windows and opened the door initially will close and lock the door.
14. Each ringer will apply hand sanitiser.
15. The 4 ringers will join the service at 9.55am.

One member will, following the above procedures, no less than 72 hours before, enter the tower and inspect the bells in readiness for ringing on Sunday.

Guidance on Early Outbreak Management

See document at end for guidance if we are notified of an outbreak

RS 29 August 2020

Revised 24 October 2020

St Michael's Church - Collecting contact details for NHS Test and Trace

The CoE guidance states

“The opening up of public places following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. In line with government guidance church bodies should assist this NHS service by keeping an accurate temporary record of clergy, staff and visitors to their church buildings for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for the church body and providing that data to them if they request it.”

“Along with other venues where people spend time churches are strongly encouraged to keep a record of those who have attended to facilitate NHS Test and Trace in the event of an outbreak of coronavirus.”

It is to be noted that this data collection is not mandatory for churches, but only “strongly encouraged”.

It is also to be noted that the purpose of the NHS Test and Trace service is to help “trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus” (Govt Guidance – NHS Test and Trace – How it works). According to that Guidance, when the service calls someone who has tested positive, they will ask “if you have had any close contact with anyone other than members of your household. We are interested in the 48 hours before you developed symptoms and the time since you developed symptoms. Close contact means:

- having face-to-face contact with someone (less than 1 metre away)
- spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of someone
- travelling in a car or other small vehicle with someone (even on a short journey) or close to them on a plane”.

For those visiting the Church during the day when it is open for private prayer or for other purposes, I suggest that we do not need to collect contact details because such visitors will not be having close contact (as defined above) with anyone.

I suggest that we only seek to collect contact details for those attending services (currently Wednesday 10am and Sunday 8am and 10am).

My proposed procedure is as follows

- Supply of data collection forms will be placed on separate table in North Porch, and steward will encourage visitors to pick one up [note that guidance now seems to be that leaflets can be made available so long as removed at end and not re-used].
- Data collection forms to be completed by people in their seats – make sure there are enough pens around the Church.
- Form is self-explanatory but clergy to draw attention to it.
- Completed forms to be placed in a plastic box in South Porch at end of service.
- Steward to seal box after each service, write date and service on label and place in Parish Office.
- We will use a separate box for each service.
- Parish Office will hold box from each service for 21 days before shredding contents.

Text of form is as follows (taken from Govt template and adapted)

CONTACT DETAILS

In order to support the NHS Test and Trace programme, we would like to collect contact details for all those attending worship at St Michael's today. This is voluntary and you do not have to provide these details.

If you do, then in line with guidance issued by the Department for Health and Social Care, we will keep these forms safely and in compliance with GDPR legislation for 21 days, before securely disposing of them by shredding. We will only share your details with NHS Test and Trace, if asked, in the event that this is needed to help stop the spread of coronavirus. We will not use your details for any other purposes or pass them on to anyone else.

Thank you for your understanding.

If you agree to providing your information for this reason, please complete the following form:

Name

Tel. No

Date

Please fold this form and put it into the plastic box in the South Porch after the service.

RS - 31 July 2020

PHE/NHS – COVID-19 – Early outbreak management guidance for places of worship.



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CHOIR COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

1. The number of Choristers will be limited to 14 people including the conductor.
2. 14 socially distanced spaces will be clearly marked in the choir stalls and sanctuary.
3. Choristers must arrive wearing a face covering and sanitise their hands in the porch on arrival. Choristers should follow all the same guidance as applies to members of the congregation attending a service (and obviously should not attend if they have any coronavirus symptoms).
4. Choristers should arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of rehearsal to give them adequate time to retrieve their music from their personal pigeon hole at the back of church. This will take longer than normal as only one person can be at the pigeon holes at any one time.
5. Robes will not be worn and the robe cupboards will remain locked.
6. Choristers should take a seat in the choir stalls or sanctuary prior to rehearsal beginning in the position indicated by the conductor. This will necessarily be different to their 'usual' seat.
7. Face coverings must continue to be worn before the rehearsal commences.
8. Face coverings can be removed for the duration of the rehearsal but should be replaced whilst awaiting the beginning of the service.
9. There will be no procession prior to the service. There will be a short break between the rehearsal and the service beginning and we would advise Choristers to remain seated in their allocated place during this time although appreciate that some may wish to use the facilities at the back of church before the service begins.
10. Face coverings must be worn between musical items in the service such as during the readings, sermon and prayers.
11. At the end of the service, there will be no formal procession but Choristers should depart in an orderly fashion keeping a 2m distance from each other during or after the final organ voluntary whilst wearing face coverings.
12. Music should either be replaced in personal pigeon holes (maintain social distancing) or taken home.
13. Conversation should be kept to a minimum until outside of the church as per the guidelines given to the congregation.
14. The resumption of choral activities has been organised in good faith and having due regard to the situation with respect to Covid-19. However it is ultimately the responsibility of each chorister (and where under 18 years old their parents) to carry out their own personal risk assessment given their unique personal situation and satisfy themselves that they are comfortable with the enhanced risks that singing in this environment inevitably entails. No responsibility will be accepted by either the Organist, Church Wardens or any other CofE authority for any consequential outcomes.

[Note that there should not be a need to clean the seats used by Choristers afterwards, unless the seats are going to be used again within 72 hours]

Robert Stokely/Roger Sudbury

11 Sept 2020

[Revised 24 Oct 2020 following PCC approval on 19 Oct 2020 to increase number of singers to 14 and adding use of sanctuary]