

WATERLOO ROAD CHURCH, UXBRIDGE: MAIN CHURCH RISK ASSESSMENT (SUNDAY SERVICES)

1. Relevant document

The latest government guidance document at the time this risk assessment is written can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>

2. Introduction

The opportunity to meet in person is critical to WRC to allow the Church to worship and fellowship together in a way that online media do not fully encourage and to provide the opportunity for visitors to hear the Gospel. WRC is therefore committed to facilitating in person-meetings as far as possible to support these objectives, whilst fully respecting the government guidelines surrounding Covid-19.

To that end, the following principles have guided the measures to mitigate the risks identified with reintroducing in-person meeting:

- We aim to create an environment that makes it easy for members and visitors to adhere to government guidance
- We aim to create a culture where members and visitors are encouraged to behave in a way that complies with government guidance. Adherence to the rules will be based on encouragement rather than policing.
- We (Elders and Deacons – the Managing Trustees) will lead by example

The context of this risk assessment is the running of Sunday Church services focussed around a morning services at 10.30 am aimed at adults, while Children and Young People's groups take place in the rear part of the church (see the separate Rear of Church risk assessment), and an evening service at 6.30 pm.

The church building is divided between the Main Church and Rear of Church (lounge, creches, rear hall) with no congregation movement between the two areas. Therefore, there are two core Sunday Risk Assessments reflecting the two areas with this document covering the Main Church.

3. Risks and Mitigations

Risks	Control Measures
Lingering infection in the building prior to opening	Morning Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ample ventilation prior to opening.• Pre-cleaning in previous 72 hours of use. Evening Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ample ventilation prior to opening.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough cleaning of touch points in the frontage toilets, chairs, and other touch points in the Main Church to be carried out between morning and evening services
Close contact on entry, while seated and on exit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior explanation to people. • Signs at entrances for people not to enter with Covid-19 symptoms or if they are self-isolating as advised by test and trace scheme. • Households to be welcomed in by stewards when previous group have used hand sanitisers or washed hands (Note Stewards' procedures in Section 4). • Stewards will maintain 2m social distancing for greeting people into church and will follow the government advice and legislation on wearing face coverings.
Incoming people infecting surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitisers available at all entrances. • Leave internal doors open wherever possible to avoid touching handles.
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear signage. • Hand sanitisers on entry. • Toilet on Left at entrance to be used for hand-washing only until 10 minutes after the service has started. • Disposable hand towels to be used in all toilets. • Increased ventilation (open windows). • Toilets in lounge area only to be used by Twist or Junior Church members and their leaders one at a time. • Increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage.
Queuing on entry causing social distancing challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid seating through clear explanation to people.
Capacity/ Overcrowding/ Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where indications are the service will be well occupied, seating plans will be prepared. • Chairs to be arranged (households/social bubble). • Capacity monitored and entry stopped when capacity reached (although Church Members may offer to go home to allow others to attend).
Exit clashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not implementing a one-way system in the Main Church as the congregation arrive in one time period and leave in another time period with no cross-over. • Once the service has concluded, the service leader will remind the congregation to remain distanced on exiting and to be aware of other households also looking to exit. • People to leave promptly and not to gather in groups, except as permitted by government social distancing guidance. • Junior Church, Twist and the Church Service will be in contact about when each activity finishes (see Procedures). Parents will wait in the main church until Junior Church and Twist have finished.
People ignoring rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create culture to encourage good behaviour and compliance.
Infection transferred by shared items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People to bring their own Bibles and song books. • Remove all possible shared items – Bibles and song books.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice sheets to be placed on chairs. Any items left in the church by the congregation will be disposed of during cleaning between services or after 72 hours.
Raising voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No loud music, singing, or any activity that requires a raised voice.
Congregation participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service leader and preacher to be on platform with 2m separation. • Any other participant to sit at the front with unimpeded access to the stage. • The service leader will not encourage any raised or projected voices during the service (e.g. singing etc). • Conversational levels of congregation participation are considered to be low risk of transmitting infection and consistent with the principle of social distancing. This may therefore be appropriate within the context of the service (e.g. by saying the Lord's prayer).
Infection transmitted when the church building is used for non-congregational recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of the congregational settings there will be recording of videos for external broadcast (e.g. on YouTube). • The guidance around social distancing of different households and use of hand sanitisers applies in this context. • Test and Trace: The numbers involved in recordings are low and the leader of the video is responsible for informing who is present, if required. However, no formal documentation is needed.
Singing and Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing and the use of blown instruments will be in accordance with the guidance for places of worship and performing arts. • Any instrument played during worship should be cleaned thoroughly before and after use unless unused for 72 hours before and after use, or only used by the individual musician. • Musicians will observe social distancing unless members are from the same household.
Microphones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singers microphones or worn microphones fitted by users will be stored away for 72 hours before being used by another user.
Infection transmitted through Communion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread will be cut prior to the service and wine will be in individual cups • Disposable gloves will be worn by the person preparing the bread and wine • The bread and wine will be available for people to pick up as they enter the church (after hand sanitising, before seating) • Any items left in the church by the congregation will be disposed of during cleaning between services or after 72 hours.
Need to identify who is at service for test and trace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph of congregation to be taken from the front during service (notification required) and/or sheet produced indicating where everyone has sat. • Visitors must sign a form to agree to be photographed and name and mobile phone number required for test and trace scheme.
Emergencies - fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire safety is the priority over social distancing. • Existing fire safety procedures apply.
First aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face shields and gloves available at first aid point.
Audio and video desks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seated before congregation enters.
Refreshments/ water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No refreshments provided at this stage. • People advised to bring bottled water.
Children under 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of Junior Church, parents are responsible for their children.

PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The congregation should observe government advice & legislation on use of face coverings. • A supply of face coverings will be available on entry. • Those leading the service (including preachers and band) do not need to wear a face covering when speaking, singing or playing to the congregation. To mitigate any risk of infection the distance to the first row of the congregation will exceed 2m. • As volunteers of the church, the worship group (single singer and musicians only) aren't required to wear face coverings when recording music or playing music live at a worship service. At all other times, face coverings must be worn.
Test and Trace (GDPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The record taken of where people sat, and filled in visitor forms, will be securely stored for test and trace purposes and disposed of after 21 days.

4. Procedures

Main Entrance Steward(s)

The stewarding team will have at least one steward to welcome outside the church. Their role is to:

- Provide a warm welcome to the church
- Ask the arrivals whether they have any signs of Covid-19 or been asked to self-isolate by "Test and Trace"
- Ask whether they have been to the church since reopening.
- If not, provide details on what will happen on arrival in the building (use of hand sanitiser, ensure they remain 2m apart from other households, someone will indicate where they are to sit)

Inside the frontage the steward/stewarding team will:

- Provide a warm welcome
- Direct arrivals to use the hand sanitiser or the hand washing facilities
- Explain that a photograph may be taken from the front for test and trace purposes and be disposed of after 21 days. If the arrival is coming for the first time, they will need to provide name and contact details which, again, will be disposed of after 21 days. Ensure forms are filled in and signed for all visitors.
- Inform the arrivals only to use the toilets near the entrance and only the right hand side before the service
- Inform the arrivals that there are no after church refreshments at this stage
- Help direct households where to sit in the church

During the service the stewards will help and support anyone who is unsure of the guidelines (e.g. needs the toilet mid-service)

After the service the stewards will:

- Provide a warm farewell
- Support the congregation to leave without exit clashes
- Direct people to use the hand sanitiser or wash their hands before leaving the building

Once the church is empty the final steward will perform ordinary checks (e.g. doors are locked) and will try to avoid touching anything the congregation has touched (e.g. notice sheets). Finally, they will use hand sanitiser as they exit the building.

End of Junior Church/Twist Procedure

Junior Church leader will inform Twist leader when they have finished. Twist leader will inform contact in main church.

5. Updates

The original plan and the risk control measures were agreed by the Elders and Deacons (Managing Trustees) at a Zoom meeting on 10th July 2020.

The following updates have been made to this document by the Elders and Deacons:

29/07/20 (changes to reflect alterations in government guidance)

- *Title* amended to reflect restarting of Junior Church
- *Introduction* amended to reflect the Rear of Church Risk Assessment
- *Lingering infection in the building prior to opening* updated to reflect reopening of the evening service
- *Infection transmitted through Communion* section added
- *Toilets* section updated to reflect restarting of Junior Church
- *Children under 12* section updated to reflect restarting of Junior Church
- *Lounge* and *Creche* sections removed and included in the Rear of Church Risk Assessment
- *Exit Clashes* section updated to reflect restarting Junior Church
- *PPE* section updated to reflect changed government advice & legislation on use of face coverings – also earlier in relation to stewards
- *Test & Trace sections* – wording altered to allow written record or photograph of where people sat

26/08/20 (changes to reflect alterations in government guidance)

- Incorporated link to government advice on Performing Arts for commencement of live music
- Simplification of the *Introduction* following 2 months of operation
- *Lingering infection in the building prior to opening* updated to remove limitations on use of ceiling fans following guidance from HSE that these can help improve ventilation
- *Capacity/ Overcrowding/ Distancing* updated to reflect seating plans only required if there is an expectation spare seats will be limited
- *Infection transmitted when the church building is used for non-congregational recordings* simplified to reflect commencement of live music
- New section *Singing and Music* added reflecting measures from the commencement of live music
- *Microphones* updated to reflect commencement of live music
- *PPE* updated to reflect commencement of live music
- *Procedures* simplified reflecting 2 months of operation