



St Barnabas, Swanmore covid policy document 004

7th April 2022

The relaxing of the rules and guidance regarding activities post 19th July 2021 means that those responsible for gatherings of people, including those for congregational worship, must make informed decisions about how to proceed within their own institution.

In church, it is the responsibility of the incumbent to make such decisions. In our case, because we are in a vacancy, the Ministry Team and Churchwardens will make any decisions together and the Area Dean and any visiting ministers will receive any policy documents. We are advised to take into account local knowledge, the nature of the building, the nature of the activity and the sensitivities of the people concerned.

An 'institution' (in our case, St Barnabas) must obey the law but, where there is leeway, can make its own rules and has the right to impose them on those who wish to use the building/facilities. Obviously, things can change at any time so this document will be reviewed and revised regularly as circumstances dictate.

The Churchwardens and Ministry Team have met and discussed these issues and this policy document is the result. The principle behind it is that we must consider the needs and well-being of others as well as ourselves and balance the need for caution with the desire to move towards a new normal. We also want to move forward together as one body even though some people will be more relaxed than others. Every individual must decide for him/herself whether or not they are comfortable coming to church and in what ways they wish to participate. The leader of any act of worship has the right to impose stricter guidelines if s/he sees a need. As an overriding principle of caring for each other: please do not attend public worship if you have any symptoms of Covid-19 or other infectious cold-like ailments.

Baptisms

There are no limits on numbers attending. Baptisms will be at 12 noon normally but where the president decides it is expedient to baptise in the main service for ecclesiological and liturgical reasons, and this is the wish of the family, care will be taken to ensure nobody is put at extra risk. The priest will continue to use a receptacle rather than his/her hand to pour the water and must sanitise before making the sign of the cross over the baby's forehead. The parent or godparent will hold the baby.

Barnaby's

Barnaby's is open and the team operating safely under their own guidelines.

Bell ringing

'Bellringing is no longer restricted by social distancing rules, although sensible precautions such as good ventilation and using hand sanitiser, are still recommended. The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has more information on how to think about this.' *From national Church guidance*. The Bell Tower Captain will follow appropriate guidance to ensure the safety of the ringers.

Buildings

In order to keep the church building as well-ventilated as possible, the Link doors will be opened for every service. For services where more than thirty people are expected to attend the chancel door will be opened to allow for increased air circulation. The Paterson Centre windows should always be opened when activities are happening. The advice from our Public Health adviser is that, although churches often do not have windows, they are large, airy buildings.

Coffee and Refreshments after services

Refreshments will be served as normal.

Face Coverings

With the ending of Covid-19 restrictions in England on 24th February, there is no legal requirement to wear face coverings in the church buildings. Public Health advice remains that face coverings are considered when in crowded and indoor spaces where we come into contact with people we don't normally meet. We therefore request that everyone consider wearing a face covering while moving around the building. The president and those assisting in leading worship will continue to wear face coverings while they are administering the bread and wine. The chaired seating area to the rear and right-hand side of the church will be designated a "masks-on" area, for those that prefer this and to protect our sound and music volunteers who have to conduct their duties in a particular area of the building.

Funerals

No additional considerations apply.

Holy Communion

Rules on serving bread and wine are now open to local interpretation. We have decided that those who wish to continue only receiving bread will indicate to the president when they approach for communion.

Others may receive bread and wine which the president will effect by sweeping the wafer into the wine, being careful not to touch the wine with his/her hands. If s/he does so inadvertently, the wine will not be used.

On no account is any individual to intinct his/her own wafer – as directed by national guidance.

The president may choose to use a second small chalice and receive wine in the normal way him or herself from that chalice but will reserve the larger chalice for intincting.

We will continue to operate the one-way system, starting from the rear of the church and moving forwards as this allows for best flow.

We will continue to share **the peace** in a non-tactile manner.

Live-Streaming

In order to provide worship opportunities for those who are vulnerable or anxious about returning to church, we will continue to livestream the 10am service whenever possible.

Private Prayer

The church continues to be open for private prayer. Sanitising products will be available.

Safer Welcome

To help enable in-person attendance for those who are more vulnerable, “leave a space” cards will be available for use to help encourage distancing between people. Alternatively a kneeler may be placed on a pew to encourage safer spacing.

Sanitising products

These will continue to be provided and individuals expected to sanitise their hands on entry to the church buildings and before receiving Communion. The president will continue to sanitise his/her hands at various stages of the Communion service.

Seating

The congregation may sit with people not of their household and in any sized group. We hope everybody will be sensitive to the proximity of others. There is – until everybody returns to church – sufficient space. Seats do not need to be booked.

Singing

Congregational singing is now allowed and is an important part of our worship together. Public Health advice is that, unless somebody is standing close to another person and facing them, or unless the singer is an opera singer, the risk is minimal because the congregation sings towards the backs of others. Therefore, we will be singing in our services without restrictions.

Sunday Club

The Sunday Club team will in general follow the face covering advice as described above. Sunday Club attendees fall below the minimum age for face coverings and so are exempt. Sunday Club leaders should consider wearing face coverings when in proximity to Sunday Club attendees. Windows will be opened in all Youth activities, both in Barnaby's and in the Paterson Centre.

Track and Trace

The NHS Track and Trace service has now closed.

Weddings

No additional considerations apply.

This document was agreed by Churchwardens - Janet Chant and Dave Lee; the Safeguarding Officer - Caroline Vost; and the Ministry Team - Jill Phipps, Hazel and Nick Whitehead on 7th April 2022. It will be distributed to the weekly email groups and be available on the church website. Hard copies will be in the Link and the vestry and will be sent to all visiting clergy.

Version History:

004: 7th April 2022
003: 27th January 2022

002: 8th January 2022
001: 21st July 2021