

Guidelines for attending gathered meetings at Swindon Evangelical Church

Please do not attend if you are unwell or show symptoms of COVID-19

It is really important that you do not attend the church if you feel unwell and have any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:

- a new continuous cough,
- a high temperature or,
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

In such circumstances you should self-isolate at home immediately (with other members of your household) and get tested as soon as possible.

Note that this advice applies to everybody, whether you have a role in the service/meeting, or are attending it.

Please do not attend if you or anybody in your household is self-isolating

Where individuals are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the household, or because they have been requested to so by NHS Test & Trace, they should not attend a church service or meeting.

Specific advice for the vulnerable

If you have any of the following health conditions, you may be clinically vulnerable, meaning you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Although you can meet people outdoors and indoors, you should be especially careful and be diligent about [social distancing](#) and hand hygiene.

Clinically vulnerable people are those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions or medicines they are taking (such as steroid tablets)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant women

Guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable can be found [here](#).

Booking process: attendance limits and arrival times

Because of social distancing measures, capacity is severely constrained. As such, numbers at services will be limited to 50.

To do this we will run an online booking service. The booking form is available [here](#).

For this initial phase, we are booking for the first four Sundays (9, 16, 23, 30 August) in one go. **You should complete the following form by Thursday 6 August 2020.**

You will receive confirmation of which services you have been allocated, and you will be required to arrive at a specific time. We cannot guarantee attendance on all the dates that you provide. If you cannot be accommodated one week, we will prioritise your attendance the following week that you are available to attend.

The form contains an optional section for you to indicate any other individual/families that you might wish to attend a service with. This is purely to facilitate potential fellowship before/after you have attended the service; full social [distancing principles](#) will still apply.

If your booking is confirmed, but you are subsequently not able to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can offer your place to somebody else.

We request that members do not attend when they are not booked in to a service, as we are keen to ensure that any individuals who might walk in from the street are accommodated in the first instance. There will be limited overflow facilities in the event that the limit for the main hall is exceeded.

Transport restrictions

We draw your attention to the legal requirement to wear face coverings on public transport.

Social distancing restrictions means that we do not encourage private car lifts for individuals outside of your household/social bubble.

We may be able to provide support for private taxis if there is a genuine need.

Car parking

We are pleased to confirm that we do have permission to use the car park at Lethbridge Road Primary School. Drivers are asked to park sensibly and all individuals should maintain the 2 metres social distancing; both in the car park and whilst walking to the church building.

Handwashing

Tables have been set up in the foyer with hand sanitiser. You should wash your hands thoroughly with the hand sanitiser as you enter the building.

Hands should also be washed as you leave the building, with sanitiser also available by the exit.

Social distancing rules

We ask all attendees to keep a safe distance of 2 metres between yourself and anybody else outside of your household/social bubble. This should be observed at all times, and applies to all individuals, including children (with parents responsible for their children).

We will try to ensure the room is well ventilated, with all the windows opened and the extraction system on.

Internal doors will be left open as much as possible and you are requested not to touch surfaces unless absolutely necessary.

Certain areas of the building, such as Church House and the kitchen, will be clearly marked out of use and you should not attempt to gain access to these areas.

Taking contact details

We are asked to assist the government's Test and Trace service by holding contact details of those that have attended each meeting for up to 21 days, and to provide this to the Test and Trace service if requested.

During the booking process for a church service (outlined above), a notice will be provided that highlights to members and regular attendees that their attendance will be logged, and that this will only be used for the purposes of Contact Tracing.

As people arrive to the meeting, the relevant deacon will note pre-booked attendees against the provided sheet, and take the details of any visitors, recording their name and contact number.

Face coverings

Following the recent changes in government guidelines, it will now be a legal requirement (from 8 August) to wear a face covering when inside the church building. There are some [limited exemptions](#), e.g. for young children under the age of 11.

We do have a small supply of disposable face coverings if required, but we would encourage you to bring your own.

Bibles

We are not able to easily lend Bibles out during the service, so we strongly encourage you to bring your own.

All hymn books and other literature from the foyer has been removed.

Seating

When you arrive at a church service/meeting, you will be directed to where you will be seated to ensure that 2 metres social distancing is maintained. We will be filling the building from the front, and you will need to sit where requested – even if this not in a location where you usually sit. You should not leave your seat unnecessarily during the service.

Format of service

The service will be based on what we have been doing online, with prayer, Bible readings and a sermon. Unfortunately singing is prohibited, so instead we will be playing videos of hymns and songs. You should stay seated during the hymns/songs.

Unfortunately there will be no separate children's meetings or crèche facilities at the moment.

We have prepared a video that illustrates how the church has been set up for social distancing, and what happens when you arrive and depart. This can be viewed [here](#).

End of service

At the end of the service you are asked to leave fairly promptly. We will be asking people to leave one row at a time from the front (pulpit end). You should leave via the door to the right of the pulpit, via the garden path and the linkway door (the route will be clearly signposted). Please ensure that the 2 metres social distance is maintained at all times. You should wash your hands using the hand sanitiser provided before you leave the building.

Unfortunately there will not be time for refreshments or after-service discussion. Regrettably there will not be an opportunity to greet the preacher after the service, however we will clearly indicate how he can be contacted should you wish to discuss any issue.

Toilets

Only the toilets by the School Room will be open. Only one person (unless they are in the same household/social bubble and therefore two people) can enter the toilets at any one time. It is vital that you wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using soap and water after you have used the facilities.

As you exit the toilets you should turn left, following the clearly sign-posted one-way system via the School Room and garden path, re-entering the main hall via the foyer doors.

Obviously you should only use the toilet facilities if absolutely necessary. Toilet hygiene will be inspected every 30 minutes by the duty stewards.

Food and drink

Please do not bring food or drink items to share beyond your household.

Cleaning

We have established a list of frequently-touched surfaces which will be cleaned with the appropriate cleaning materials before and after a service. The toilets will also be cleaned before and after services, and inspected every 30 minutes. Disposable gloves and face coverings are to be worn whilst undertaking cleaning activities.

Risk Assessment

As part of the re-opening process we were required to produce a full risk assessment. This document is published on the church website. We will continue to monitor and update this document.