
ST JAMES COVID-19 PROTOCOL

Version Date: 28 September 2021

For church activities, including church services, restrictive measures apply within the 1.5 meter society to protect persons and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In this protocol the chaplaincy council of St James specifies which measures are to be taken by the council and all churchgoers to ensure that the health risks of attending physical church services at the British School (and any other venues) are minimized. These measures are based on the national guidelines of the RIVM (see: <https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19/tackling-new-coronavirus-in-the-netherlands> and <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2021/09/14/aanpak-najaar>) and on agreements made between the CIO (Interdenominational Contact in Government Affairs) and the National Government, as stipulated in the article 'Geef elkaar de ruimte' published on 17 September 2021 (<https://www.cioweb.nl/>).

1. GENERAL

Everyone is urged to adhere to the Dutch measures against coronavirus (including rules pertaining to international travel and quarantine) as prescribed by the RIVM:

<https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19/tackling-new-coronavirus-in-the-netherlands>.

People should not come to church:

- if they or a family member or co-resident has been diagnosed with a corona infection
- if they or a family member or co-resident has flu symptoms (*cold, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, (mild) cough and breathlessness, possibly accompanied by an elevated temperature (up to 38 degrees) or fever*).
- If you have symptoms of coronavirus disease, get tested. For full instructions see: <https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-test/getting-tested-for-coronavirus-if-you-have-symptoms>

Preparations before coming to church:

- People are strongly advised to wash their hands before and after travelling to church: for 20 seconds with soap and water, and afterwards dry your hands thoroughly.

The following measures apply in the church:

- Everyone is strongly advised to keep appropriate distance from one another
- Hygiene measure: Wash your hands; no handshakes; cough and sneeze in your elbow. Disinfectant is available at the entrance of all church buildings.
- The instructions of the welcome team or other responsible persons in the church building are to be followed.
- All measures apply both to those who have been vaccinated as well as to those who have not.
- From 26 June 2021 the wearing of face masks becomes optional where distancing is possible. However, face masks remain compulsory wherever distancing is not possible, such as when entering or leaving the church building, or when going forward to receive communion.

2. CHURCH SERVICES

A. THE LAYOUT OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

1. The church wardens are responsible for establishing the layout of the church building
2. Care will be taken to ensure that there is enough space for everyone to attend safely, with consideration for those who wish to keep 1.5 meters distance.
3. Seats are to be placed at least 1.5 meters apart.

B. HYGIENE

1. For every service a volunteer should be appointed, who is ultimately responsible for the hygiene within the church building (“hygienist”). This is normally one of the church wardens.
2. All doors in the hall in which the service is held should stay open before, during, and after the service, to make sure that the space is ventilated as well as possible.

C. THE CHURCH SERVICE

1. The service is open to churchgoers who are free of symptoms that are related or could be due to COVID-19. The registration procedure and allocation of seats are decided by the chaplaincy council.
2. Churchgoers follow the indicated walking route in the church building as well as the instructions of the welcome team during entry, communion and departure.
3. There is a limited possibility for congregational singing. Congregational singing is allowed at speaking volume. A music team may lead the music on behalf of the congregation.
4. The president will disinfect their hands and wear a face mask during the distribution of communion.
5. At the giving of Communion, the president receives Communion in both kinds. The words of distribution ('The body and blood of Christ' or 'The body and blood of Christ keep you in eternal life') are spoken to the congregation, and all who intend to receive say, 'Amen'.
6. At the distribution, the consecrated bread or wafer will need to be dropped into the hands of communicants.
7. Communion will be distributed in one kind (only bread) and only by the president. One can also choose to be spiritual communicant from one's own seat. One can come forward for a blessing.
8. Where children's church is organized, the government regulations regarding schools and childcare are to be followed.
9. A cash collection will not be taken. People will be informed of the various options to give online.
10. Churchgoers who test positive following attendance at church should inform the church wardens as soon as possible. Where necessary, a process of contact tracing will be started according to the RIVM protocol (<https://lci.rivm.nl/COVID-19-bco> and <https://informatiehulp.rivm.nl/>).

3. PERSONAL PASTORAL CARE

- a. Personal pastoral care and professional and mutual attention for each other should be done carefully and safely. Clergy and members of care teams should not visit unannounced. Where possible, ministry should take place via online platforms (such as Zoom) or by phone. Home visits should only be undertaken by consent of the one who is being visited.
- b. During personal meetings, the prescribed distance is 1.5 meters consistently observed.
- c. Physical contact through touch is avoided in all cases.

4. CHURCH ACTIVITIES AND GATHERINGS

- a. Determine for each meeting whether it is necessary to meet each other physically. If possible, opt for a digital meeting.
- b. The space in which the physical meeting takes place is designed to keep everyone 1.5 meters apart. Attention is also paid to walking routes through the space.
- c. At all meetings the hygiene measures as described with regard to church services are fully applicable.
- d. Meetings are only accessible to participants who have registered or who have accepted a personal invitation.
- e. A seat is available for all participants.

5. COMMUNICATION

- a. This protocol is published on the church website (www.stjames.nl).