
ST JAMES COVID-19 PROTOCOL

Version Date: 4 December 2020

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 on agreements made between the CIO (Interdenominational Contact in Government Affairs) and the National Government.

1. GENERAL

Everyone should adhere to the quarantine measures as prescribed by the RIVM:

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

People may 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*)

For those belonging to the higher-risk groups (see: <https://www.rivm.nl/en/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/risk-groups>) the following applies: '*Be extra vigilant. It may be wise to stay at home as much as possible for the time being*'. For those in higher-risk groups church attendance is discouraged and is undertaken at one's own risk. One should not only take one's own health into account, but also the possible burdens on others (e.g. the healthcare system) if one unexpectedly falls ill.

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.
- People are strongly advised to use the toilet at home before coming to church, to minimize use of the toilets in the church building.

The following measures apply in the church:

- All adults keep 1,5 meters (two arm's length) distance from others at all times.
- Children up to and including 12 do not need to keep 1,5 meters distance from other children or adults.
- Children between 13 and 18 do not need to keep 1,5 meters distance from other children, but do need to keep 1,5 meters distance from all adults.
- Avoid all physical contact (no hugging, no handshakes).
- Hands are disinfected upon entry. 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 followed.

Instructions concerning face masks:

- Face masks are to be worn by the congregation, except for children under 13 and those with health problems which would make wearing a face mask difficult, in accordance with government law as per 1 December 2020 (see: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19/openbaar-en-dagelijks-leven/mondkapjes/>).
- Face masks are not compulsory for the clergy with the exception of situations in which the 1,5m distance cannot be maintained. Examples include the distribution of communion and baptism.

2. CHURCH SERVICES

A. THE LAYOUT OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

1. The church wardens are responsible for enforcing the layout of the church, the maximum number of attendees and the walking routes.
2. The main venue of St James, the hall of the British School, can safely accommodate a maximum of 75 people.
3. It should be clearly indicated which door(s) to the church building serve as entrances and which as exits.
4. There should be an indicated walking route in and out of the building, without intersections. This should be done by means of drawings, markings on the ground or via instructions from the welcome team.
5. In the aisles, the distance of 1.5 meters is indicated by markings on the ground. Distance should be kept between people when entering or exiting the building
6. All seats are to be placed at least 1.5 meters apart.
7. People who together form one family or household may sit next to each other without observing the 1.5 meter distance. 1.5 meter distance must be kept between these groups and others sitting nearby.
8. A cash collection will not be taken. People will be informed of the various options to give online.

B. HYGIENE

1. For every service a volunteer should be appointed, who is ultimately responsible for the hygiene within the church building ("hygienist").
2. Before and after each service, the following items must be cleaned:
 - a. door knobs (possibly extra cleaning shortly after the start or before the end of the celebration)
 - b. chairs
 - c. lectern
 - d. altar table
 - e. microphone
 - f. music equipment
 - g. toilets and kitchen
3. 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. The use of air conditioning is prohibited.

4. The doors of the church building are open before and after the celebration so that door handles are touched as little as possible. The welcome team closes the door after the last registered churchgoer has arrived.
5. The cloakroom cannot be used. Coats must be brought to the seat.
6. Soap pumps and paper towels are available in the toilet areas; the use of fabric (washable) towels is not allowed.
7. After using the toilet, the visitor flushes the toilet with closed lid and cleans the tap and toilet with the available disposable cleaning wipes , which are then deposited in the bin.
8. All people involved in the service (president, service leader, preacher, musicians, reader, prayer, etc.) disinfect their hands prior to the service, where necessary (e.g., president before Holy Communion) during the service and after the service.

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. On arrival, the churchgoers wait outside at the entrance of the church, 1.5 meters away from each other and enter one by one. Timely arrival is advised to ensure everyone can enter safely.
3. Churchgoers are received by the welcome team, made aware of the health and safety guidelines, and asked about any symptoms. Those with symptoms are denied access.
4. Upon entry, the name and contact details of the churchgoers are checked against the register. On the register is noted who actually attended the service. These lists are kept for a maximum of 4 weeks (for possible contact tracing by the GGD) and then destroyed.
5. Churchgoers follow the indicated walking route in the church building as well as the instructions of the welcome team during entry, communion and departure.
6. A minimum number of people are involved in the service. If possible, multiple roles should be performed by one person.
7. Congregational singing is prohibited. One or two members of the music team may lead the music on behalf of the congregation.
8. 1.5 meters distance must be kept at the sharing of the peace.

9. The President will prepare the table for services of holy communion, and clean-up at the end.
10. The president will wear gloves and a face mask during the distribution of communion.
11. 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'.
12. At the distribution, Holy Communion is administered in silence. The consecrated bread or wafer will need to be dropped into the hands of communicants.
13. Communion will be distributed in one kind (only bread) and only by the president. Communicants follow the indicated walking route, observing the 1.5 meters distance from one another as indicated by the markings on the floor. One can also choose to be spiritual communicant from one's own seat. One can come forward for a blessing. Both president and communicant observe the prescribed 1.5 meters distance.
14. After the celebration the president dismisses the congregation from the altar - there is no goodbye at the door of the church.
15. Under certain conditions, meeting and coffee can take place after the celebration. The conditions are:
 - a. In principle, drinking coffee takes place outside
 - b. coffee is not to be drunk in the same room as where the church service was held
 - c. coffee is served by people who do not belong to risk groups
 - d. the RIVM regulations, including keeping a distance of 1.5 meters, are observed
16. Where children's church is organized, the government regulations regarding schools and childcare are to be followed.

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)
- b. A plan detailing walking routes and revised church layout is available on the church website and is clearly displayed in the church building.
- c. Parishioners are directly informed of the content of the plan with specific attention to the registration procedure and associated timelines as well as the new layout of the church building.