



BACK TO JUNIOR CHURCH BRIEFING

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been safely using technology to run our Junior Church sessions. This has proved challenging in some ways, and easier in others. Engaging children on screens has worked more for some than others. With this in mind, we long to reopen our building and worship and learn together again in a safe and responsible way. The proposals below, which we hope everyone will follow, are in line with Church of England and national guidance for worshipping communities.

Sessions

It has been decided that for the time being there will only be one service on a Sunday at 10am. During this time, we will be running our two sessions alongside the service in person and no longer on Zoom. During the main worship service, children and young people should sit with their households.

The general guidance from the Department for Education for 'Out of School Settings' recommends that, to reduce the risk of transmission, children who attend should be kept in small, consistent groups, and of no more than 15 children plus additional leaders. Groups should continue to operate the recommended safeguarding adult to child ratios which vary depending on the ages and abilities of the children in the group. Children should be assigned to a group and should then stay in those consistent groups for future sessions and avoid mixing with other groups in our setting.

Face masks

Everyone over the age of 11 should wear a face mask in church at all times. Children under this age who would like to wear a mask are also welcome to do so.

Hygiene

Hygiene levels will be rigorously maintained, particularly in the areas of hand washing, use of toilet facilities and surface and equipment cleaning, particularly areas that are of child height. The church will be providing many areas of hand sanitising.

Social distancing

As we know, children find it more difficult to social distance from others. The over 5 group will be required to sit socially distanced from other children and the adults in their session. For the under 5 group, we will encourage social distancing, but understand that this will be harder to maintain.

Resources/Learning

Guidance from London Diocese states that 'any shared facilities for children, such as play corners, soft furnishings, and soft toys that are hard to clean, should be removed and/or put out of use'. As a result, we will be removing or placing these items out of reach. Children will receive individual packets of resources that they will use each time they attend church. Again, this will prove more challenging with the under 5s, but supervision will be maintained at all times and any sharing will result in handwashing and object disinfection.

Volunteers/Parents

Depending on the number of children attending, because of the adult-child ratios, there must be a minimum of two adults in each group. We have decided that it would be best to use parent volunteers for the time being to minimise the risk of transmission to those adults without children. So for the time being, the volunteer helpers may be more flexible and chosen on the day from who is in attendance.

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