**Coronavirus (COVID 19) Guidance for Volunteers.**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a flu like virus for which there is currently no vaccination. Therefore, you should exercise caution and follow the guidance below to minimise the risk to yourself and your family.

The symptoms of COVID 19 are:

* New persistent cough (coughing for more than an hour or 3 + coughing episodes in 24 hours).
* High temperature.
* Shortness of breath.
* Loss of taste or smell.
* Sore throat.
* Headaches.

Many of these symptoms are similar to other illnesses (viruses) such as the common cold and flu. In most cases the virus will be mild leading to a full recovery however the virus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, the elderly, and those with pre-existing medical conditions like diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, compromised immune systems, heart disease and chronic lung disease.

**Transmission**

COVID-19 can be spread through one of three main routes:

* **Droplet transmission** – droplets generated by coughing, sneezing or even talking;
* **Direct contact transmission** – occurring during skin to skin or oral transmission;
* **Indirect contact transmission** – occurs when a susceptible person has contact with a contaminated object, such as bedding, furniture, toilets, hand basins, crockery etc. from the environment of an infected person.

**Note**: Protective equipment such as face covering will not protect you from contracting the virus but provide some protection in stopping you from spreading the virus should you be asymptomatic.

**The incubation period for COVID-19 is two weeks.**

This means you can harbor the virus for up to two weeks after coming into contact with the virus before displaying signs of infection. During this time, you are asymptomatic.

**The virus can live on surfaces, clothing, bedding etc. for up to 72 hours.**

If an infected person spreads the virus through touch or bodily fluids it will remain active for up to 72 hours in the ambient environment and therefore can infect anyone who comes into contact with the affected area/surface.

**Protecting Yourself:**

1. **Hand Hygiene:**

* Wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water for a minimum of 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand wash.
* Maintain social distancing- maintain at least 2m (6ft distance) radius between yourself and others.
* Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose.

1. **Respiratory Hygiene:**

* Cover mouth & nose with tissue or sleeve if you do not have a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
* Put used tissues in bin immediately and was hands as above.
* **Catch it. Bin it. Kill it**.

1. **Personal Decontamination Clean:**

* It is advised that immediately on returning home you should remove clothes and wash them at a temperature above 60°C.
* Shower in hot soapy water. This should incorporate washing of hair.
* Only then should you mix with members of your household.

1. **In addition:**

* Clean objects and surfaces you touch frequently – door handles, kettles, phones, remote controls, railings, countertops, etc.
* Clean shared bathrooms and toilets after each use.
* Do not share towels including hand towels.
* Stay informed and follow the advice given by NHS, PHE and WHO

**Emergency advice:**

In the event that you do come into contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19 the following actions should be taken.

* Self-isolate for two weeks.

If you do display symptoms of COVID-19 check 111 online coronavirus service or call 111 for advice and guidance.

* Self-isolate for 7 days.
* If you no longer have a temperature after 7 days, you do not need to continue self-isolation.
* You must immediately inform the Parish Priest of your contact and the timescales involved.
* Your involvement with the team and beyond will be time lined to facilitate a risk assessment to identify the likelihood of the potential spread of infection.

**Precautions to take when volunteering:**

* You must practice social distancing at all times and remain 2m away from other volunteers and visitors to the Church.
* You must be mindful of respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene.
* You will be advised to wear disposable, single use gloves.
* You may choose to wear face covering which can be reusable and should be washed after each use.
* You must be cautious when removing gloves and face covering and wash hands after removal.
* You must not to touch your face.
* You must wash your hands before and after eating or drinking.

**Cleaning Regime**

In addition to the precautions to take when volunteering, those tasked with cleaning in the Church must pay particular attention to:

* All door handles, push plates and other frequent touched areas are to be disinfected before and throughout opening.
* Any equipment used for cleaning must also be cleaned and sanitised before and after use.
* At the end of every prayer session the area will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected including floors.
* All volunteers are advised of the benefits of bathing/showering before socialising with members of household.

**First Aid Guidance during COVID-19**

It is recognised that First Aid remains a crucial skill even during the COVID-19 pandemic. While you are advised to have no physical interaction with parishioners, there may be a situation where you are required to assist in a medical emergency. You should only administer First Aid if you are trained to do so. The First Aid Kit should be easily accessible (see below for list of contents).

* **Cross-Contamination**.
  + Be aware of the risks of cross contamination to yourself and others. You will need to be within 2m of a casualty when administering First Aid.
  + Follow normal protocol for assessing the casualty.
* **Keep yourself safe**.
  + Wash or sanitise hands before and after treating a casualty.
  + Do not cough or sneeze over the casualty.
  + Ensure any cuts or grazes on your hands are covered with waterproof dressing.
  + Where possible, wear protective equipment i.e. gloves and face covering, especially if dealing with open wounds.
  + Do not touch an open wound on a casualty with your bare hand.
  + Dispose of all waste safely.
* **CPR**
  + Look for the absence of signs of life and absence of normal breathing.
  + **DO NOT** listen or feel for breathing by placing ear and cheek close to the casualty’s mouth.
  + Ensure emergency services have been called.
  + It is advised to attempt compression only CPR until emergency services arrive.
  + If there is a perceived risk of COVID-19 place a damp cloth/towel over the casualty’s mouth and nose before commencing compression CPR.
  + Use of a defibrillator will significantly increase survival if available.
  + After performing CPR, you must thoroughly wash hands as advised and seek advice from NHS 111.
  + It is strongly recommended to have a personal decontamination clean as soon as reasonably practicable.
* **Basic Workplace First Aid Kit should include:** 
  + **Plasters**: used for small cuts and grazes.
  + **Dressings**: used to apply pressure to larger wounds and help to stop bleeding.
  + **Bandages**: used to support joints, hold dressings in place, put pressure on wounds and to stop swelling.
  + **Scissors**: used to cut bandages or sticky tape or someone’s clothing if you need to get to a wound.
  + **Disposable gloves**: used to reduce the risk of infection.
  + **Face shields or pocket masks**: used to prevent infection when you give rescue breaths.
  + **Cleansing wipes, alcohol free wipes**: used to clean the skin around the wound.
  + **Adhesive tape**: used to hold dressings or the loose end of bandages in place.
  + **Foil blankets**: used to help retain body heat in survival, emergency and first aid situations.

This is the recommended list from St John’s Ambulance and complies with BS 8599 guidance.

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