

COVID 19 Mission and Ministry with Children, Young People & Families in a Church Setting

Getting Everyone Back Together Safely

Updated 17 August 2020

Contents

Children and Youth Activities.....	1
Reopening Children and Youth Provision	3
Frequently Asked Questions	4
Working with Early Years 0-4 years	4
Working with Primary School Age Children 5-11 years	6
Working with Secondary School Age Young People 12 -18 years	7
FAQ's that apply to both children and youth groups.....	8
Intergenerational worship	15

Introduction

As lockdown measures start to ease, we are working to understand what a safe return to face to face mission and ministry with children, young people and families may look like, as the readiness levels change in your area.

It is important to remember to stay alert to changes in guidance as restrictions may continue to ease or be re-enforced should there be a local outbreak of coronavirus. Key reference points for this guidance are the [Government guidelines for places of worship](#), [Church of England website](#), and the [National Youth Agency's website](#). This document has chosen to quote guidance that follows both government guidelines and best safeguarding practice for children and youth work in a church setting. The hyperlinks provided within this document will guide you to the source of the information.

Children and Youth Activities

The National Youth Agency guidance has been produced in collaboration with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive. It provides regular updates, determining the COVID-readiness level for the youth sector in England, specifying permitted group sizes, as well as a range of other control measures referenced below. Users should ensure they are referring to the most up to date document, which can be found on the www.nya.org.uk website. This document refers to guidance published by [NYA on 8th August 2020](#), version 2.

Whilst in the main worship service, children and young people should sit in their households, however, children and youth activities are now permitted. The Church of England website states that children's

activities being organised by the place of worship alongside or within a service or at other times during the week should follow principles in the general guidance from the [Department for Education on Out of School Settings](#).

In outline, these recommend that, to reduce the risk of transmission, children over the age of 5 years and young people who attend should be kept in small, consistent groups, and of no more than fifteen 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 particular class or group and should then stay in those consistent groups for future sessions and avoid mixing with other groups in your setting.

Providers caring for children under the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for [Early Years and Childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#).

All activities should still comply with current safeguarding guidance as set out in the [Parish Safeguarding Handbook](#).

Those attending should practise physical distancing and wear face coverings in line with the government's current guidance. As the risk of transmission is considerably lower outdoors, providers who normally run sessions indoors should consider whether they are able to do so safely outside on their premises. Any shared facilities for children, such as play corners, soft furnishings, soft toys that are hard to clean, should be removed and/or put out of use.

Where young people or children are coming unaccompanied then we would advise consulting [Safer Environment and Activities](#) from the National Safeguarding Team and adding a safeguarding assessment as part of the overall risk assessment for opening, particularly sections 1.3 on risk assessment and 2.10 on young people who attend church activities without their parents. If you are collecting data for NHS Test and Trace the details of the parent or guardian of an accompanied young person or child need only be collected. For unaccompanied children or young people aged 13 years old or over, they can be asked to provide their details and sign the consent form, or make an individual booking where consent is required. You may need to explain to them what the data is being collected for so they understand what Test and Trace is about, rather than relying on them reading and understanding the privacy notice on their own

All children and youth activities should also comply with the government [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of places of worship during pandemic updated 4 August 2020](#) and can only function if all spaces to be used, worship space or other church buildings and rooms are Covid-19 secure.

Each church will need to assess the risk in their own context and make a clear plan of how to manage expectations, particularly if children and young people spend time in both the main worship service and separate groups.

Reopening Children and Youth Provision

Once the guidance has been read in full, we recommend that churches take their time to reopen their children and youth provision only after consultation and consent from volunteers, parents, and young people. In addition, each church needs to complete regular risk assessments taking into consideration what is possible in their [buildings](#) and [spaces](#), particularly if [different groups share the same facility](#). It is important to remember that there is no 'one size fits all' that captures all nuanced types of practice, therefore, **this document should be used as a guide to inform local decision making**. Organisations must make their own judgements and undertake comprehensive risk assessments to decide if it is possible to comply with the guidance. Diocesan children, youth & family ministry advisors are available to help with any troubleshooting for your context.

Action plan and risk assessment templates for youth groups, plus 5 steps to safer working posters can be found <https://youthworksupport.co.uk/>. You must keep your plan under constant review and be ready to react if the readiness level changes, ensuring you communicate changes to young people, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders. Your action plan should include clear information about how your service can and will respond to different readiness levels to minimise risk.

Churches need to make sure that their plans for restarting face-to-face meetings and activities are developed so that, at all times:

- Volunteers, children and young people comply with social distancing and face covering requirements (determined by the government).
- Hygiene levels are maintained, particularly in the areas of hand washing, use of toilet facilities and surface and equipment cleaning, particularly areas that are of child height.
- Any risk to volunteers, young people and the wider community, is safely managed, including a reduction in group sizes where necessary.
- Vulnerable young people and adults can be effectively safeguarded, both in relation to COVID-19, as well as other risk factors.
- Volunteers, parents, children and young people all clearly understand what adjustments need to be made to ensure everyone's safety and have had a chance to inform them.

Once the planning and consultation phase is complete, each church can make the decision when to resume face-to-face meetings and activities, whilst remaining within the government guidelines. We anticipate a phased return and encourage churches to consider a mixed mode of digital and gathered meetings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do I have to re-open my children and youth activities?

- A. **No.** It is important to only start back when you have planned, prepared your building, consulted your families, young people and volunteers and made a fresh [risk assessment](#), which is approved by the PCC.

Working with Early Years 0-4 years

Q. Can my church stay and play baby and toddler club meet?

- A. **Not yet.** The government guidance for both [early years settings](#) (section 3.5) and [out of school settings](#) (Q.4) requires that parents and carers should not be allowed into the setting unless this is essential, due to guidelines on group sizes and social distancing. Children should be dropped off and collected at the door if possible.

Due to concerns of rising prevalence in the community within England, indoor play areas including soft play areas will remain closed until at least the 15th August. This will remain under review, according to section 3 of the [government guidance on safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#).

We suggest that you remain in touch with families with very young children using a variety of approaches including phone calls and remote sessions using a video conferencing platform, following [Church of England Safer Church guidance](#).

Q. Can my Church Community Centre re-open?

- A. **Yes**, community facilities can now open for the provision of services for children and young people, provided you are able to provide a [COVID-19 secure facility](#). Measures should be in place to ensure all users of community facilities follow the guidelines including **strict adherence to social distancing** of 2 metres or 1 metre with risk mitigation (where 2 metres is not viable) are acceptable. You should consider and set out the mitigations you will introduce in your risk assessment.

The size and circumstance of the premises will determine the maximum number of people that can be accommodated while also facilitating social distancing. Further guidance on the size of gatherings and permitted activities can be found in the [government guidance on safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#).

Churches that host formal childcare and educational settings in their community centres should refer to the relevant Early Years and childcare government guidance. Please note the current advice for [early years settings](#) is to reduce face-to-face contact with and between parents and carers.

Reduce contact between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up their children, for example by limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family and staggering timings. **Do not allow parents or carers into the setting** unless this is essential and arrange for children to be collected at the door if this is possible.

Q. Can my church host a crèche during a church service?

- A. Not yet.** For the time being, children of all ages are expected to remain with their households when gathering as a congregation to worship.

[Government guidance on young people and children attending places of worship states:](#)

- Young children should be supervised by the parent or guardian. They should wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use hand sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered. Places of worship can help remind children and young people, and their parents and guardians, of the important actions they should take during the COVID-19 outbreak to help prevent the spread of the virus. Posters on general hand hygiene can be found on the [eBug website](#).
- Any shared facilities for children, such as play corners, soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean, should be removed and/or put out of use.

Families are encouraged to bring their own resource pack that might aid their young children to worship within the main congregation. Alternatively, churches can provide play boxes **instead** of pew bags but they must contain items that can be easily cleaned. The boxes should be deposited in a separate area after use and follow the [Church of England Worship Guidance](#) on sharing:

In circumstances where worshippers cannot bring their own books, places of worship should keep a selection of clean books for individuals to use. Clean books should be quarantined for 48 hours since their previous use and should be quarantined for 48 hours again after use. Items which cannot be easily cleaned should also be subject to the 48-hour quarantine after use.

Q. My church has a group for 3-4-year-olds that meets during the service. Can this now meet?

- A. Yes,** however children must be confident to stay in their group without their parent/carer. If this is not possible, the child should remain with their household in the main congregation.

Providers caring for children under the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for [Early Years and Childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). From 20 July, early years settings are no longer required to keep children in small, consistent groups within settings but can return to normal group sizes which is dependent on the size of the premises, type of activity and appropriate adult:child ratios. Settings should still consider how they can minimise mixing within settings, for example where they use different rooms for different age groups, keeping those groups apart as much as possible.

Please note the current advice for [early years settings](#) is to reduce face-to-face contact with and between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up their children, for example by limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family and staggering timings. **Do not allow parents or carers into the setting** unless this is essential and arrange for children to be collected at the door if this is possible. Remember to update risk assessments and keep registers of children present for [NHS test and trace](#) purposes.

Q. I have a mixed aged group of young children; can we still meet?

- A.** If you are caring for children both over the age of five and under the age of five, then you could apply the measures outlined in the [Early Years guidance](#) to the children under the age of five, and [Out of School Settings](#) guidance to the children over the age of five, if it is possible

to do so. However, if you have mixed age groups together you will need to, as far as possible, keep all children irrespective of age in small consistent groups of no more than 15 children with the appropriate number of leaders to meet relevant adult:child ratio requirements.

Working with Primary School Age Children 5-11 years

Q. Can my Church host a Holiday Club or Junior Church activities?

- A. These are allowed to meet** (unless you are in an area of local lockdown) and can continue once school restarts, now that [schools](#) are encouraged to provide extra-curricular activities that benefit the well-being of children. They come under the Department of Education guidance for [Out Of School Settings](#). These guidelines are for children aged 5 years and above and are set to reduce rates of infection so please consider carefully if your group will be able to fulfil the requirements and recommendations.

The government has also issued [guidance for parents](#) which states:

Parents and carers should consider sending your child to the **same setting consistently**, in order to prevent your child from mixing with multiple different groups of children.

You are also advised to choose settings that are **local to you**. Where possible, parents, carers and children are encouraged to walk or cycle to the setting or to use a private vehicle. If you are using a private vehicle to take your child to an activity, you should avoid using it to take other children from outside your household to the same activity even if they are in the same small, consistent group. You are also encouraged to avoid using public transport to get to activities, particularly during peak times.

The scientific evidence suggests that there is a moderate to high degree of confidence that the susceptibility to clinical disease of younger children (up to age 11 to 13) is lower than for adults. However, it remains important that protective measures as outlined in this guidance are put in place to help reduce the risk of transmission.

It is important to consult with parents and carers about returning to groups and work out a programme that does not exclude those who are still cautious about their child being involved in multiple out of school setting groups, particularly as children readjust to returning to school.

Working with Secondary School Age Young People 12 -18 years

Q. Can my youth group now meet?

- A. **Yes.** The [National Youth Agency](#) amber level came into place from 4 July in England, **except in areas where local lockdowns have been imposed**, which return to red level. It suggests that following completion of an action plan and risk assessment (consistent with the NYA guidance on managing youth sector activities and spaces during COVID-19), individuals may gather indoors or outdoors, provided there are **no more than 15 young people plus leaders**. Where possible, the groups should be smaller.

The following activities are permitted at the amber readiness level:

- Online and digital youth services.
- Detached/outdoor local youth activities (consistent with social distancing guidelines)
- 1-2-1 indoor sessions with young people.
- Small group sessions delivered indoors (consistent with social distancing guidelines).
- Further guidance can be found here:

<https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NYA-Guidance-version-2.pdf>

When planning activities, social distancing, hygiene measures and risk assessments should be in place. Please read through the FAQ's on what you can do indoors and outdoors, group size, face coverings etc. that follow.

[Governments guidelines](#) currently state that in worship or devotions:

People should avoid singing, shouting, raising voices and/or playing music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission from aerosol and droplets.

Whilst this guidance may negate some of the usual youth work activities, please remember that there are no restrictions on discussion, Bible study, sharing of testimonies and prayer. Encourage your group to think creatively about how they would like to run their session and which activities are important to them for building faith. Young people should be encouraged where possible to bring their own equipment (Bible, snack and drink) and avoid sharing equipment.

It is important to discuss with young people expectations and reasons for the changes in behaviour (e.g. complying with social distancing) and activities (no singing or shouting). We encourage leaders to agree a code of conduct with young people and be prepared to follow through on a protocol should a young person choose to ignore the behaviour code.

Q. Can I take my youth group to the park?

- A. If you are operating as a church youth group (of no more than 15 young people plus leaders), you will need to meet at your place of worship.

According to [government guidelines](#):

A place of worship refers to a building used for regular religious ceremonies, communal worship or similar gatherings by religious organisations. It includes the use of surrounding

grounds, for example, adjoining car parks, courtyards or gardens for which the venue managers are also responsible.

The guidance also covers premises when being used for religious gatherings, even when their primary purpose is not for religious gatherings, such as a community centre. These premises will only be able to be used where they are permitted to be open and additional guidance may be applicable.

This guidance does not cover public parks, private homes, cultural sites or other open spaces, such as woodlands which may be used for religious purposes. If people do want to engage in worship in these spaces, then the guidance relevant to that place should be adhered to.

Should you choose to take a group of young people to a local park, your group size should be limited to 6 people from different households i.e. 4 young people and 2 leaders; or 2 households. You might like to try a social action activity with these smaller numbers.

Q. Can I take my youth group away camping?

- A. **No.** Overnight stays will not be permitted during amber readiness level. Overnight camping will be permitted at yellow readiness level.

FAQ's that apply to both children and youth groups

Q. What activities can I do indoors?

- A. If you choose to run sessions indoors there is a higher risk of transmission. **You should maintain current government guidance on social distancing and consider the risks accordingly.** Activity times should be kept as short as possible.

There are different risk levels depending on the type of activity or provision on offer. If your provision is classroom-based, you should find the Department for Education's [Guidance for full opening: schools \(7 August update\) section 3 on curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support](#) helpful in determining activities and how to [carry out a risk assessment](#), depending on the age of the children you cater for.

Our interpretation of the guidance suggests activities you can do:

- Use digital media.
- Share stories such as Bible stories and personal testimonies, discussion.
- Pray.
- Non-contact indoor games e.g. *Simon says*.
- Craft activities. **Sharing of equipment is not advised**, particularly of malleable materials e.g. playdough. Resources for activities e.g. painting, sticking, cutting, small world play, indoor and outdoor constructions should be washed before use. An alternative to providing equipment is to encourage children to bring a pack with their own equipment, Bible and snack.

Hands should be washed before and after use.

Singing, shouting-out, blowing instruments and sharing of food is **not** permitted. However, clapping and signing actions are allowed.

Some indoor sports may be possible provided activities are kept short, social distancing is adhered to and there is adequate ventilation. Contact sports should not take place. Government guidance can be found [here](#).

Q. Can our choir/orchestra/worship band rehearse and perform indoors?

A. **Yes.** [Government guidelines](#) issued 14th August state:

Led devotions

- There should be **no group singing by worshippers**. Places of worship should take account of the [Performing Arts guidance](#).
- Small groups of professional or non-professional singers will be able to sing in front of worshippers both outdoors and indoors from 15 August. **Singing in groups should be limited to a small set group of people and should not include audience participation.**
- Where music plays a big part in worship, and recordings are available, we suggest you consider using these as an alternative to live singing.
- Any instrument played during worship should be cleaned thoroughly before and after use.

[Church of England guidelines](#) add that singers and musicians must remain in line with the recommendations for physical distancing and hygiene set out by the Government in their performing arts guidance. This includes those who regularly volunteer to do music and singing, as part of a choir for example, to perform as a part of worship.

Congregations are still at this time not permitted to sing as part of worship. Wherever possible people should continue to physically distance from those they do not live with, venues, performers and audiences should be matched to ensure 2m distancing applies and **the number of performers should be limited**. Those assisting with worship through music or singing do not always need to wear a face covering, but face coverings or screens should be used if physical distancing cannot be maintained.

The same guidance for worship bands applies, following the Government guidance on performing arts. Players need to be appropriately physically distanced, and the music should not be so loud that it encourages people to shout above it. However, playing of instruments that are blown into should be specifically avoided in worship or devotions.

Q. Can we sing and play blown instruments indoors in our groups?

A. **Not yet.** [Government guidelines](#) issued 14th August state:

- Except for the limited circumstances described for led devotions (see Q. 12), people should avoid singing, shouting, raising voices and/or playing music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission from aerosol and droplets.
- Therefore, spoken responses during worship should also not be in a raised voice.

- Activities such as singing, chanting, shouting and/or playing of instruments that are blown into should be specifically avoided in worship or devotions. This is because there is a possible additional risk of transmission in environments where individuals are singing or chanting as a group, and this applies even if social distancing is being observed or face coverings are used.

Where music plays a big part in worship, and recordings are available, we suggest you consider using these as an alternative to live singing in your children and youth settings. You might like to consider clapping or using Makaton or BSL to sign to worship songs as an alternative to singing.

You are advised only to play musical instruments that are not blown into, which can be cleaned thoroughly before and after use.

Please note, the [Government guidance for full opening: schools](#) (updated 7th August) states that:

Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies. Further detailed DfE guidance will be published shortly.

Q. Can we serve food as part of our children and youth work?

- A. Not yet.** The [Church of England guidance](#) suggests where food or drink ('consumables') are essential to the act of worship, they can be used, however the sharing of food should be avoided, as should the use of communal vessels.

However, you can encourage children and young people to bring their own snack and water bottle to your activity group, although sharing is not allowed.

Q. What activities can I do outdoors?

- A.** As the risk of transmission is lower outdoors, activities should take place outdoors as often as possible and when it is safe to do so. Equipment should be regularly dis-infected and social distancing should be maintained. Contact sports should not take place.

Churches should refer to the following advice:

- [guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation](#) and guidance from [Sport England](#) for grass root sport.
- advice from organisations such as the [Association for Physical Education](#) and the [Youth Sport Trust](#) which has suggestions for physical education for both primary and secondary school age.

Outdoor playgrounds are permitted to open where a risk assessment shows that it is safe to do so, see relevant government guidance. Particular attention should be paid to cleaning frequently touched surfaces by children and those that are at child height.

Q. What size group can I have?

- A.** [NYA updated their advice](#) on 8th August. To reduce the risk of transmission, children and young people who attend should be kept in small, consistent groups, and of **no more than fifteen children, plus additional leaders**. Groups should continue to operate the recommended safeguarding adult to child ratios which vary depending on the ages of children in the group

and where possible, the groups should be smaller. Organisers are advised to re-open slowly and should run pilot sessions with fewer than 15 attendees, to ensure it is possible to manage social distancing and hygiene measures in accordance with [NYA guidelines](#):

- Organisers should divide young people into bubbles, with a maximum of 15 young people per bubble.
- Children/young people should be placed in age appropriate bubbles.
- Members of each bubble should adhere to the current social distancing requirements.
- Upon arrival/departure, participants should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser.
- Should any member of a bubble become unwell, all members of the bubble should contact NHS Test and Trace. All members of the bubble (including leaders/visitors) should also be suspended from attendance and requested to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Social distancing should be maintained during all activities.
- Organisers should be aware of attendees who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable and should prepare their risk assessment accordingly.

Q. How many groups can I have?

- A. It may be possible for multiple groups to convene in your venue, if all the practices stated in the [NYA document](#) are implemented.

To ensure that participants remain safe:

- Organisers should divide young people into fixed bubbles, with a maximum of 15 young people (plus workers/leaders) per bubble per session.
- Bubbles should not join with other bubbles.
- Individuals should remain in the bubble they are allocated for that day and ideally over repeat attendance, though this may not be practical in some circumstances.
- As the risk of transmission is lower outdoors, activities should take place outdoors as often as possible and when it is safe to do so.
- Different bubbles should ideally enter and exit through different doors – when sessions begin, during breaks and when leaving the site. If not possible then stagger arrival and departure times where possible.
- Organisers should encourage young people to arrive only with members of their bubble and to avoid mingling before and after sessions. We understand that organisers have limited control in this regard, but we encourage you to brief young people and to educate them on social distancing requirements.
- Shared spaces such as sports halls, kitchens, etc. must be deep cleaned thoroughly between use if different bubbles are to use them on the same day (sequentially). Spaces should not be used at the same time by more than one bubble.
- Enhanced regular cleaning of commonly used surfaces, such as equipment and door handles, should be ensured.

It is not necessary for each bubble to use separate toilets; however, efforts should be made to limit the numbers of users at a given time. Use of different toilets for each bubble is ideal. Please consider safeguarding concerns when planning and preparing your risk assessments.

Q. I have different children come each week. What do I do about consistent groups? Do the groups have to be children from the same school?

A. The [NYA guidelines](#) state that:

Individuals should remain in the bubble they are allocated for that day and ideally over repeat attendance, though this may not be practical in some circumstances.

This implies the children do not have to be in a group with children from the same school, although where possible, this will help with consistency in other settings. It also recognises the difficulty of maintaining consistent groups from week to week, particularly where attendance is not compulsory. Each church will have to make a local decision on consistency of groups over repeat attendance, based on their particular context and in consultation with parents/carers.

Q. Can I lead a group on a Friday night and then a different group on a Sunday?

B. The [NYA guidelines](#) state that it is best practice to:

- Reduce the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).
- Individuals should remain in the bubble they are allocated for that day and ideally over repeat attendance, though this may not be practical in some circumstances.
- Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This guidance for working safely during the COVID-19 pandemic should ensure that volunteers are afforded the same level of protection of their health and safety as employees and the self-employed.

This suggests that it is not best practice to lead two groups back to back on the same day, but allows for leading a different group on a different day. Ideally, volunteers should be kept in fixed teams for repeat attendance groups, to reduce the amount of social contacts. Whilst it is ideal to keep the same leaders from week to week, this may not always be possible. Each church will have to make a local decision, based on their context, in consultation with parents/carers and volunteers.

Q. Do I need to keep a register?

- A. Yes.** The NHS has established a new Test and Trace Service. The government is asking cafes, restaurants, social venues and places of worship where individuals are onsite (inside or out) for more than fifteen minutes to record attendance information for the purposes of contacting individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19. There is new [guidance from the Department for Health and Social Care](#).

What should you be doing?

For all activity that lasts more than fifteen minutes in duration should capture the following information on all leaders and young people in attendance:

1. Name
2. Phone number of next of kin, or the individual if over 16
3. Email address for next of kin, or the individual if over 16
4. Date and time of entrance and exit

Visitors who do not remain onsite for more than fifteen minutes do not need to be recorded. For example, parents who drop off their child or young person and leave quickly do not need to be recorded. However, a sports coach who delivers a 30-minute session would need to be recorded.

[Church of England guidelines](#) from 17th August suggest that where young people or children are coming unaccompanied then we advise consulting [Safer Environment and Activities](#) from the National Safeguarding Team and adding a safeguarding assessment as part of the overall risk assessment for opening, particularly sections 1.3 on risk assessment and 2.10 on young people who attend church activities without their parents.

If you are collecting data for NHS Test and Trace the details of the parent or guardian of an accompanied young person or child need only be collected. For unaccompanied children or young people aged 13 years old or over, they can be asked to provide their details and sign the consent form, or make an individual booking where consent is required. You may need to explain to them why the data is being collected so they understand what Test and Trace is about, rather than relying on them reading and understanding the privacy notice on their own

Q. Is it safe for children with SEND to attend?

- A. Yes.** However, their return should be informed by agreeing a risk assessment and action plan with parents/carers, to help churches ensure that the right support is in place for them to come back. The government has the following [SEND risk assessment guidance](#).

Q. Do we have to wear face coverings in our groups?

A. The [NYA guidelines](#) section 21.0 state that:

In England, face coverings are now required by law to be worn in shops, supermarkets, indoor transport hubs, indoor shopping centres, banks, building societies, post offices, on public transport, places of worship and importantly community centres. The law now requires **all those over 11yrs to wear a face covering** unless with good reason when attending youth sector activities. We strongly recommend that you wear a face covering in any enclosed public space where there are people you do not normally meet.

There are also settings where you must wear a face covering by law. A full list of where you must wear a face covering in England is available on [GOV.UK](#). Specific requirements in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are available on the websites of the devolved administrations.

Please be mindful that some individuals and groups have reasonable excuses for not wearing a face covering due to age, health or other conditions which are not always visible.

Things to consider:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it after putting on.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with the manufacturer's instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

Q. Do children and youth leaders need to wear face coverings?

A. The [Church of England guidance on face coverings](#) suggest you do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes:

Those who are leading services or events in a place of worship, and those who assist them (for instance by reading, preaching, or leading prayer) do not always need to wear a face covering, although one should be worn especially if physical distancing cannot be maintained (i.e. distributing consumables) *This exemption does not apply to worshippers, who should wear face coverings consistent with the requirements for any other public space.*

Children and youth leaders should follow this principle and can remove face coverings whilst they are reading aloud, teaching or leading prayer. However, they must maintain social distancing from both children, young people and other adults in the session and replace their face covering afterwards. If this is not possible, it is best practice to wear a face covering throughout the session.

The [Church of England](#) are not offering advice on the use of visors as the Government advice specifically covers the use of face coverings and does not refer to visors.

Q. My church has started to livestream services with a gathered congregation. What is the advice for featuring children and young people in a service?

- A.** Church of England advice on GDPR and permissions for adults and children, photo and video free zones and other considerations can be found [here](#).

Intergenerational worship

Q. Can my Messy Church have a gathered meeting?

Messy Church is an act of worship, not a school, children's activity or toddler group, so comes under the [guidance provided for acts of worship](#). Key factors to consider are maintaining social distance, minimum contact between people; minimum contact with materials/equipment; hand hygiene and risk assessments. The BRF Messy Church team have suggested a format that should be viewed as a starting place for planning a Messy Church in your context. It can be viewed [here](#).