

COVID-19 – RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

JESMOND PARK UNITING CHURCH



Version: Ver 1.0, 17 March 2020

Context & Purpose

This document provides the Protocols established by Jesmond Park Uniting Church (JPUC) in response to the declaration by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of World Pandemic status for the COVID-19 virus, and an escalation in both community transmission of the virus within Australia and steps by authorities to slow further transmission.

This document is written with reference to advice from the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church (<https://nswact.uca.org.au/staff-intranet/employee-update-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>) and the Australian Government (www.health.gov.au) at the Version date at the top of this document.

“Response Protocols” in this document refer to Specific Actions to be undertaken for any Activity involving use of Jesmond Park Uniting Church properties, including during worship, and applies to others who use church facilities.

Basic Message

JPUC is a welcoming faith community of hope, love and justice. This includes those exposed to and who have contracted COVID-19, and the general community, and Church members have a responsibility to protect and show compassion to all. We stand by and affirm these principles.

We understand the health and well-being implications of COVID-19 and that a national response is necessary and will abide by the direction of any relevant Government authority.

Who has Authority?

This document and all Protocols within are under the authority of JPUC Church Council and must be approved by the Chairperson of Church Council (or nominated and approved delegate). The responsible Church Officer (Responsible Officer) for Specific Actions associated with Protocols are outlined within each. For the purpose of clarity:

- “Event Leader” herein refers to an individual who is in control and who has responsibility for the use of Church Facilities during an Activity, or is leading that Activity.
- “Person in Charge” herein refers to an individual who is by agreement of the Event Leader is in control and who has responsibility for a specific sub-Activity (an example is the preparation and distribution of food within an Activity).

Specific Response Protocols

The following five protocols are to be used by JPUC and are outlined in the following Sections:

- Protocol 1 – Basic Hygiene
- Protocol 2 – Temporary Suspending of Church Activity
- Protocol 3 – Third Party Use of Church Facilities
- Protocol 4 – Pastoral Care
- Protocol 5 – Contact Through Church Office

Protocol 1. Basic Hygiene

Basic hygiene principles will be established and messaged within JPUC based on current advice from WHO, including the following:

- People will be asked to use hand sanitizer and/or wash hands with soap frequently when using Church Facilities, especially before activity begins and/or after coughing or touching.
- People will be asked to maintain personal separation as much as possible, avoiding skin to skin contact (shaking of hands for example) and to cover their mouths if coughing.
- People who are ill or have come into contact with those known or suspected of having COVID-19 will be asked to not attend Church Activities. They will be asked to follow self-isolation principles and seek medical assistance in accordance with Australian Government advice.
- An Activity which involves the preparation and distribution of food items (including communion) will follow revised hygiene principles.

Specific Actions:

Table 1 Specific Actions associated with Protocol 1 – Basic Hygiene and Human Interaction

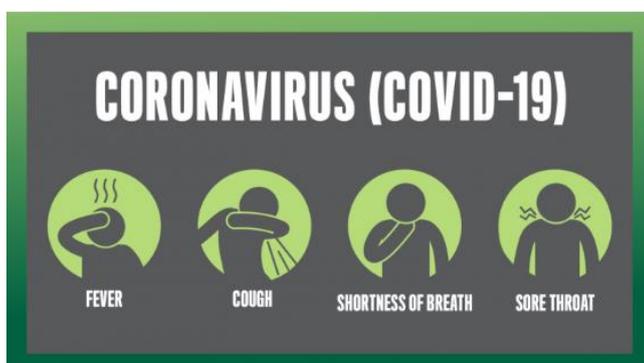
Protocol 1: Basic Hygiene		
What	By whom	Responsible Officer
Inform people of basic hygiene principles.	Leader of event at <u>beginning of each Activity</u> (this may include demonstrations).	Chairperson of Church Council to inform event leaders of requirement.
Advertise correct hygiene principles within facilities, including bathrooms.	Property and Finance to print and hang posters.	Chairperson of Church Council to supply appropriate posters in consultation with Church members with medical experience.
Provide hand sanitisers and/or hand washing soap during activities.	Leader of activities to ensure sanitizer is available in obvious locations, and soap is available in bathrooms.	Property & Finance co-ordinator to ensure adequate supplies of hand sanitiser and/or soap.
Hand sanitiser or soap, or other basic hygiene material (such as toilet paper) cannot be procured.	Event Leader to temporarily suspend event in accordance with Protocol 2, unless an alternative acceptable means of sanitation can be provided.	Property & Finance Co-ordinator to approve alternative sanitation method.
Preparation of and serving of communion or other food items.	Person in Charge to ensure; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People preparing and serving food adhere strictly to hygiene principles. • No self-serve food collection – all food is to be served (including morning tea, communion and at Cheap Chewsdays). 	Event Leader to ensure compliance.
Person who normally attends Activity is diagnosed with	Event Leader to advise individual not to attend	Chairperson of Church Council to consider continuing with

<p>COVID-19, has symptoms or known to have contact with those confirmed with COVID-19 and whom has not had a period of self-isolation following exposure.</p>	<p>Activity, and to follow self-isolation principles (see https://www.health.gov.au/). Event Leader to consider implications of Protocol 2 in relation to the Activity.</p>	<p>Activity. Final decision made by approval of Church Council.</p>
<p>Church facilities require disinfecting due to COVID-19 contamination. This could include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of an individual with COVID-19 or known exposure to such, who has used church facilities. • Strong suspicion in relation to such contamination. 	<p>This may be raised by Event Leaders, Person in Charge, a Church Officer or through the actions of third parties (see Protocol 3). This can be made known to any Church Officer who will advise the Property and Finance Coordinator.</p> <p>The Finance Officer will determine the contractor to undertake facility cleaning if such is needed. If no contractors are available, the facility will be closed for 72 hours before cleaning by church volunteers.</p>	<p>The Property and Finance Coordinator will determine;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether disinfection cleaning is required. • What facilities are to be cleaned – will notify Chairperson of Church Council so that Protocol 2 can be considered on these facilities. • Whether physical barriers or notices applied to notify users of any areas off-limits are needed. • When the facility is ready to be reopened.

Protocol 2. Temporary Suspending of Church Activity

JPUC facilities will be closed and/or an Activity suspended if:

- Directed to by an Australian Government, or the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church.
- COVID-19 situation deteriorates, and it remains impossible to act sensibly to protect people.
- There is increased risk of virus transmission through the Activity itself, determined by the Event Leader.
- The Activity involves interaction between Church members and others, where the risk of virus transmission is unknown or cannot be determined (for example, where those other groups do not have any evident COVID-19 response protocols themselves or cannot be controlled).
- Enough Church members cannot (through COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure) attend, or choose not to take part due to exposure risk, that it makes the Activity unsafe or unworkable.
- There is an individual taking part in the Activity who has symptoms of COVID-19 or is suspected of being exposed to those with COVID-19. Symptoms are in accordance with advice from the Australian Government and include the following.



- A Response Protocol is not adhered to and the Event Leader determines there is an increased risk of virus transmission during an Activity.

Specific Actions:

Table 2 Specific Actions associated with Protocol 2 – Temporarily Suspending Church Activity

Protocol 2: Temporarily Suspending Church Activity		
What	By whom	Responsible Officer
An Activity is temporarily suspended due to any reason.	Those noted within this Protocol.	<p>Chairperson of Church Council through agreement of Church Council to have final decision and to inform Event Leaders and any relevant Church officers, including likely timing.</p> <p>Chairperson to advise Presbytery of decision.</p> <p>Property and Finance Coordinator to arrange for notices to be placed at all</p>

		<p>Church entry points using template in Appendix A.</p> <p>Church Administrative Assistant to inform Church members through email list.</p> <p>Event Leader to notify any relevant external stakeholders.</p> <p>Website and social media site coordinators to alter sites to inform what Activities are impacted.</p> <p>Finance Officer to inform third party Facility Users in accordance with Protocol 3.</p>
<p>Australian Government makes Direction that impacts ability to hold Activity.</p>	<p>Event Leaders to inform any relevant Activity members.</p> <p>Suspending of Activities in accordance with the actions in the first item in this Table.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council through agreement of Church Council to rule on what Activities are impacted, and to inform Event Leaders and any related Church Officers including likely timing.</p>
<p>Community virus transmission escalates, and it is impossible or impractical to act sensibly to protect Facility Users.</p>	<p>By determination of Church Council this tipping point is approaching or is reached and gross suspending of events is needed as a response. Three phases of action are used:</p> <p>Phase 1 – all third party Facility Users are notified that the Church facilities are closed for use and their Activities temporarily suspended, in accordance with Protocol 3 below.</p> <p>Phase 2 – all Church led Activities are temporarily suspended, including worship. Use of offices by Church Officers continues.</p> <p>Phase 3 – all Church Facilities are closed for use.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council in consultation with Church Council determines which Phase to enact.</p> <p>Process in row 1 of this Table used to enact.</p> <p>Note that approaches to Church Council to relax the use of the Worship Centre for funerals will be taken on a case-by-case basis and ultimately approved by both the Chairperson of Church Council and the presiding Minister.</p>
<p>Person attends Activity who has COVID-19 symptoms, or</p>	<p>Event Leader to approach individual and ask them</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council to consider continuing with</p>

<p>known to have contact with those confirmed with COVID-19 and whom has not had a period of self-isolation following exposure.</p>	<p>politely to leave Activity. If they refuse, or the Event Leader considers Protocol 1 has been compromised, then consider suspending Activity. Event Leader must inform Chairperson of Church Council of any such incident.</p>	<p>Activity. Final decision made by approval of Church Council.</p>
<p>Church members exposed to unacceptable or unknown virus transmission risk from outside parties.</p>	<p>Event Leader to consider risk in consultation with any relevant Person in Charge and the Chairperson of Church Council (or delegate).</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council to consider continuing with Activity. Final decision made by approval of Church Council.</p>
<p>Insufficient Church members available to maintain workable or safe Activity.</p>	<p>Event Leader to consider risk in consultation with any relevant Person in Charge and the Chairperson of Church Council.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council to consider continuing with Activity. Final decision made by approval of Church Council.</p>
<p>Reinstatement of Activity</p>	<p>Event Leader to consider reinstatement of Activity in consultation with the Chairperson of Church Council.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council to consider reinstatement of Activity. Final decision made by approval of Church Council.</p> <p>Property and Finance Coordinator to arrange for removal of notices on all Church entry points.</p> <p>Church Administrative Assistant to inform Church members through email list.</p> <p>Event Leader to notify any relevant external stakeholders.</p> <p>Website and social media site coordinators to alter sites to inform what Activities are reinstated.</p> <p>Finance Officer to notify any relevant third party Facility User.</p>

Protocol 3. Third Party Use of Church Facilities

The following principles will apply to third party users of Church facilities (Facility Users):

- JPUC will take no responsibility for the safety of third-party users in relation to COVID-19.
- Third party users will be expected to abide by all directives of Church Council in relation to these Response Protocols, including expectations on hygiene and the potential temporary suspending of Activities.
- Third parties will need to agree to JPUC principles of response or face termination of their tenancy or the inability to use the facilities (if casual users).

Specific Actions:

Table 3 Specific Actions associated with Protocol 3 – Third Party Use of Church Facilities

Protocol 3: Third Party Use of Church Facilities		
What	By whom	Responsible Officer
Facility Users have to agree to abide by certain principles in relation to JPUC management of COVID-19 risk or risk having their tenancy or use of facilities terminated.	<p>All Facility Users will be provided by the JPUC Finance Officer with a Notification (see Appendix B) of COVID-19 management and by return letter (also in Appendix B) these users will need to agree to the general principles.</p> <p>For casual users, Finance Officer to determine approval or not of facility use. Those not agreeing to Notification will be refused use.</p> <p>Finance Officer to advise Chairperson of Church Council of formal Tenant responses.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council with agreement of Church Council to decide on response to Facility Users including moves to terminate tenancy, or notify of temporary suspending of Activity, and reinstatement of Activity.</p> <p>Finance Officer to advise Facility User of outcome, and to notify any relevant internal stakeholder.</p>
Long term Facility User (Tenant) obviously not complying with Notification (Appendix B) principles.	<p>Facility User to be notified by Finance Officer of breach and given 1 warning. Notified that only one warning given before move to terminate Tenancy.</p> <p>Second breach Finance Officer will advise Chairperson of Church Council and seek decision.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Church Council to decide to move to terminate tenancy, or an alternative approved by Church Council.</p> <p>Finance Officer to advise Facility User of outcomes and any relevant internal stakeholder.</p>
Facility User advises of potential COVID-19 contamination due to group individual being diagnosed or having exposure.	<p>Finance Officer to immediately notify Chairperson of Church Council and Coordinator or Property and Finance.</p> <p>Finance Officer to consider exposure risk in consultation</p>	<p>Church Council Chairperson to consider response including approving suspending Church Activities under Protocol 2.</p>

	<p>with Church members with medical experience – if required, initiate facility disinfecting as per Protocol 1 and initiate Protocol 2.</p> <p>If facility disinfecting is required then Finance Officer to charge original Facility User with cost of disinfection services.</p>	
<p>Rental houses – how are they treated?</p>	<p>The Finance Officer will advise if there is any action required to consider impacts to our two rental houses. No Specific Actions have been identified in relation to these.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Protocol 4. Pastoral Care

There are several novel pastoral care issues that need consideration, including:

- The emotional and health impacts on vulnerable groups within the community, including the aged and those with underlying health conditions.
- Stress and anxiety in the general community – feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness.
- The potential for long periods of isolation, cut-off from normal pastoral care responses.
- The potential to be exposed to COVID-19 when making pastoral care visits.

Specific Actions:

Table 4 Specific Actions associated with Protocol 4 – Pastoral Care

Protocol 4: Pastoral Care		
What	By whom	Responsible Officer
A Church member is diagnosed with COVID-19 or placed into isolation due to possible exposure.	Administrative Assistant is advised and they attempt to seek status and approval of individual for name to be released. Administrative assistant advises Elders and Pastoral Care team, and the Chairperson of Church Council.	Chairperson of Church Council to inform Church Council. Church to be informed of case at notices during Worship – if individual approves, name is made known, if not kept confidential.
Pastoral Care visits to person with COVID-19 or who has been placed in isolation because of possible exposure.	Pastoral Care team to make contact – <u>physical contact is to be avoided</u> with non-physical means of contact preferred such as telephone calls, emails or social media. In the event that the individual is not receiving correct attention or support through family members or other means then formal authorities should be contacted.	Elders and Pastoral Carers to monitor situation.
Church member declines communion or to join in Church Activities due to personal concerns around infection.	Event Leaders to remind people that caution is acceptable. Communion leader to remind people of hygiene principles but that involvement is of course optional.	Event Leaders to ensure messages get across.
Anxiety and stress continues to grow in Church community around COVID-19.	Event Leaders to reiterate hygiene principles, to keep people up to date with actions, and to reassure people that	Chairperson of Church Council to regularly remind people of Response Protocols.

	<p>what can be done is being done.</p>	<p>Administrative Assistant through the Elders and Pastoral Care team to report through newsletter on the progress of sick individuals.</p>
<p>A Church member dies during a period when the Church Facilities are closed due to COVID-19 concerns.</p>	<p>Family approaches presiding Minister or Church Officer seeking funeral service in Worship Centre. That Minister or Officer to bring to the attention of Church Council.</p>	<p>Approaches to Church Council to relax the use of the Worship Centre for funerals will be taken on a case-by-case basis and ultimately approved by both the Chairperson of Church Council and the presiding Minister.</p>

Protocol 5. Contact through Church Office

It is likely that information on COVID-19 will be sought by the Church and broader community, and that certain individuals may seek assistance, through the Church Office. Phone calls, messages and emails may be received by a variety of Church Officers, with the principles of response being;

- Community members simply looking for advice should be directed to formal Government hot-lines and information services.
- Church members seeking support should be directed similarly, but the Elders and Pastoral Care team also be notified.
- An individual may present physically at the office with COVID-19 symptoms – and people will need to know what to do.

Specific Actions:

Table 5 Specific Actions associated with Protocol 5 – Contact Through Church Office

Protocol 5: Contact Through Church Office		
What	By whom	Responsible Officer
Correspondence is received in the Church Office seeking assistance with a COVID-19 related issue.	<p>Relevant Church Officer is to note down contact and direct individual as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If seeking general medical advice direct to Government web site www.health.gov.au or the National Coronavirus Health Information Phone Line on 1800020080 • For interpreting services direct them to phone 131450 • If it is a medical emergency they are to ring 000 	<p>Any situations considered serious are to be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of Church Council.</p> <p>If any individual is a Church member they are to be made known to the Administrative Assistant who will advise the Elders and Pastoral Care team.</p>
Individual(s) appear physically at Church Facilities seeking assistance who are likely to have COVID-19 infection.	<p>If Church Officers working alone or in small numbers, ensure doors are kept locked at all times. Once individuals are identified, do not let within Church Facility but correspond through the door or via telephone and direct as above.</p> <p>If approach escalates or could become violent remove yourself to somewhere safer and ring the police.</p> <p>Church Officers should consider working from home for the duration of the Pandemic.</p>	<p>Any situations considered serious are to be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of Church Council.</p> <p>If any individual is a Church member they are to be made known to the Administrative Assistant who will advise the Elders and Pastoral Care team.</p>



COVID-19 – ACTIVITY/ACTIVITIES IMPACTED

The following Activities at this facility have been temporarily suspended in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Activity 1 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 2 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 3 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 4 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 5 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 6 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 7 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 8 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 9 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 10 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 11 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 12 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 13 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 14 - _____ Until date: _____.
- Activity 15 - _____ Until date: _____.

This activity/activities will not resume until the date indicated - this notice will be updated regularly.

This action has been taken according to either direction by the Government or in accordance with the Jesmond Park Uniting Church Covid-19 Response Protocols, a copy of which is available on our web site at jesmondpark.unitingchurch.org.au or by contacting the Church office on (02) 49574566.

We apologise for any inconvenience but we have taken this action in the interests of protecting our broader community.

Notice Date: / /2020

Chairperson of Church Council
Jesmond Park Uniting Church



Appendix B – Message to Third Party Users of Facilities & Return Agreement Letter

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – NOTIFICATION TO THIRD PARTY USERS OF FACILITIES

Jesmond Park Uniting Church
15 ROBERT ST JESMOND NSW 2299



16 March 2020

Dear JPUC Facility User,

As you aware, the World Health Organisation has declared a global pandemic in relation to COVID-19 (the Coronavirus) and the Australian Government has moved to place restrictions on business and the community in an effort to slow the spread of the virus. This is requiring an unprecedented response to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities are not exposed and the health system is able to cater for the inevitable demands.

Jesmond Park Uniting Church (JPUC) has considered the implications of this and our response in consideration of protecting our broader Church community, including those who use our facilities. This includes formal Tenants and casual users (collectively Facility Users).

As a result, we have enacted a Response Protocol (available on request) which has the following implications for those Facility Users.

Basic Hygiene

We have raised our expectation of basic hygiene principles in relation to the use of our facilities. This includes the placing of notices at various points informing people of specific hygiene expectations, including hand washing, and to remind people not to take part in activities if they are ill, or exposed to the virus and in need of isolation.

JPUC has traditionally provided sanitation consumables for use within kitchens and toilets but due to the unprecedented short supply of such cannot guarantee that these will be available for Facility Users. Unfortunately, if we cannot provide such we will be forced to suspend the use of our facilities until supplies can be re-instated, unless Facility Users can provide their own alternatives which will need to be approved by JPUC.

We also need to be careful in relation to surfaces that may be contaminated by individuals carrying the virus. For this reason, we ask that Facility Users notify us immediately if you become aware of any individuals within your group who use our facilities who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or known to be exposed to an individual who has and have not had a period of isolation in accordance with Government advice (see <https://www.health.gov.au/>).

If such exposure increases in frequency we may be forced to increase cleaning frequency which will come at additional cost, or suspend certain activities to prevent continued virus

exposure, or require Facility Users to clean surfaces themselves. The primary objective of any action will be to protect all of the groups who use our facilities.

Potential Suspension of Activities

If the situation develops further it is likely that we will need to suspend certain activities involving the use of our facilities for a period of time until the situation improves and public safety can be assured. We value our Facility Users highly and would hope to do so only after consultation on the risks and reasons for doing such.

However, we may be directed by a Government to cease such activities or the situation may escalate so fast that we have no control over this decision.

If such a decision is taken, this will be from the direction of the Chairperson of Church Council to temporarily suspend activities and may be made with very little warning. This will result in;

- Instructions being issued to Facility Users not to use the facilities for certain activities, or approval to use our facilities not being granted.
- Cessation of rent/lease payments until the activity is reinstated.
- The posting of notices on facility entry-ways describing what activities are impacted and until when.
- The posting on JPUC web-site and social media of same.

Note we cannot take any responsibility for impact to your businesses or events for any temporary suspension and consider COVID-19 a Force Majeure event.

JPUC will continue to monitor the situation and would reinstate any suspended activities as soon as possible. This would be notified to Facility Users as soon as the situation was clear.

Agreement of Facility User

By return of the signed letter attached within 1 week of receipt, we ask for your agreement to this Notification and our response to the risks that COVID-19 represents to the activities undertaken at JPUC facilities. If you do not agree to the approach in this Notification we may be forced to immediately suspend or possibly terminate your tenancy or to not approve the use of our facilities, whichever applies.

Sincerely

Don Thompson
Finance Officer JPUC

**To/ Finance Officer
Jesmond Park Uniting Church
15 ROBERT ST JESMOND NSW 2299**

AGREEMENT TO THE USE OF JESMOND PARK UNITING CHURCH FACILITIES IN RELATION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear Finance Officer,

We have received your Notification in regard to our use of the Jesmond Park Uniting Church (JPUC) facilities and your response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I confirm that in response we:

- Agree to comply with the basic hygiene expectations of JPUC in our use of your facilities and to notify all in our group of these expectations.
- Agree that if JPUC can no longer provide basic sanitation consumables that our use of the facilities may have to be temporarily suspended until such can be procured, unless we can provide these ourselves and to the approval of JPUC.
- Agree to notify JPUC of any individuals within our group who use your facilities who are either diagnosed with COVID-19 or we become aware have been exposed to those who have and have not had a period of isolation in accordance with Australian Government advice. We understand that there may be an additional cost of cleaning if such individuals are so identified.
- Acknowledge that for reasons of broader public safety or Government directive, the JPUC Chairperson of Church Council may have to temporarily suspend use of JPUC facilities by our group, a decision which will involve consultation but may come with short notice.

Date: / /2020

Facility User group: _____.

Authorised person (print name): _____.

Authorised person (signature): _____.