

Shree Geeta Bhawan (SGB)

Risk Assessment for Safety during Covid-19

Date of Introduction – 30th May 2021

- 1) This document is Shree Geeta Bhawan's Risk Assessment for dealing with the current Covid-19 situation as to opening the premises of the SGB safely for devotees as a place of worship. The premises are owned solely by the SGB and not shared with anyone.
- 2) The Hazard identified is the spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus which is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways. Its symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe, or fatal.
- 3) The persons identified who might be harmed are the temple priests, kitchen staff, teachers, trustees, devotees/visitors, cleaners, employees of the building Contractor and its sub-contractors (together referred to as stakeholders). Vulnerable people with underlying health conditions may need additional care.
- 4) The risk assessment must be carried out by the Appointed Trustees in consultation with the stakeholders particularly priests, kitchen staff, teachers and students, trustees, cleaners, employees of the building Contractor, sub- contractors (if any), visitors, and devotees who regularly attend (only if it is feasible to do so). Professional help from a specialist consultant in health and safety will be sought if it becomes necessary. The appointed trustees may be required to attend training courses and communicate with stakeholders to explain to them how the trustees will manage the risks from Covid-19.
- 5) The Appointed Trustees will in particular consult in detail and on regular basis with the head priest, a representative of the builder, other trustees, dance and Hindi teachers, and the SGB kitchen supervisor who has been chosen on behalf of the staff and she will be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development of the policies in partnership with the appointed trustees.
- 6) This document will be shared with all the stakeholders once finalised.
- 7) **Notices will be displayed** at SGB to show that the government guidance has been followed, namely:
 - a. A Covid-19 risk assessment has been carried out and the results shared with the stakeholders.
 - b. That adequate cleaning, handwashing, and hygiene procedures have been put in place in accordance with government guidance.
 - c. **That all reasonable steps have been taken to help devotees and others to attend SGB's premises safely.**
 - d. That all reasonable steps have been taken to maintain a 2m distance between each individual or the members of one household/support bubble at SGB premises.
 - e. Where people cannot be 2m apart, such as during busy periods, that all has been done to manage transmission risk which includes the usage of face coverings and reducing the 2m distance to no less than 1m under any circumstance.

8) The **risk assessment** has been carried out to:

- a. Assess and manage the risks of Covid-19.
- b. To identify sensible measures to control the risks at SGB premises.
- c. Control risks in the SGB premises due to Covid-19.
- d. Protect stakeholders from risks and harm and support their health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- e. Ensure compliance with the existing legal obligations relating to Health and Safety under Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 to identify illness and hazards of Covid-19, take action to eliminate the hazard or at least control the risk.
- f. Ensure that stakeholders at SGB premises move around safely during the Covid-19 pandemic and keeping as many people as possible 2 metres apart from those they do not live with or share a support bubble with.
- g. Provide a practical framework of how to reopen premises for worship during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- h. Ensure that no one is obliged to work in an unsafe environment.
- i. Assess whether any stakeholder is especially vulnerable to Covid-19.

9) **Preventative/Control** measures to reduce risk of harm to the lowest practicable level by taking preventative measures for Stakeholders.

- a. To encourage stakeholders to increase the frequency of handwashing with soap and water and surface cleaning.
- b. All stakeholders to report any symptoms of Covid-19.
- c. When stakeholders attend SGB's premises to make every reasonable effort to comply with social distancing set out by the government (keeping people a minimum of 1m or ideally 2m apart wherever possible).
- d. Stakeholders requested to provide their name and contact number to support the NHS Test and Trace service designed to track and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- e. One-way system of entry and exit to be introduced and indicated with signs and/or displayed maps.
- f. A deep cleaning and sanitation of the SGB's premises (especially bearing in mind of government guidelines) must be carried out before opening up the premises to the devotees, preferably by a specialist company if it is practicable and feasible, and then follow up to be carried out on a regular basis.
- g. Where social distancing cannot be followed then staff to wear protective face masks at all times.
- h. Reducing movement at the SGB by discouraging non-essential movement within the premises.

- i. Encouraging staff to communicate from distance or by telephones with each other whilst at the SGB premises.
- j. Using remote working platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype for business, Facetime and WhatsApp video calls to avoid trustee meetings in person.
- k. Adequate cleaning facilities are maintained.
 - i. Frequent cleaning of SGB's premises and equipment using anti-bacterial and disinfectant cleaning products
 - ii. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly such as sinks, reception area, door handles, light switches, etc.
 - iii. To follow the advice of Public Health UK on <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- l. Appointed Trustees to ensure that the necessary procedures are being followed.
- m. Other trustees will check to ensure that the preventative/control measures are being adhered to.

10) Preventative measures to reduce risk of harm to the lowest practicable level by taking preventative measures for devotees, visitors, and contractors.

- a. No face-to-face meetings with devotees at the SGB offices unless specifically approved by head priest Shri Dharm Dutt Vasistha Ji or Mr Mukesh Murria, or in their absence Dr Arun Sinha Ji, or in his absence by Naresh Sabharwal Ji.
- b. Appointments with priests must be kept to a minimum and only if absolutely necessary. A 1m distance (ideally 2m) MUST be maintained and face masks/coverings MUST be worn.
- c. Devotees and visitors must be given clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene prior to their arrival by phone, SMS or email (if it is practicable and feasible).
- d. Treasurer will provide guidelines as how to handle donations, giving receipts, counting money, banking, booking procedure in consultation with the head priest.

11) The use of face coverings is required whilst in the SGB unless you have a legitimate reason not to wear one as advised by the NHS guidelines.

Stakeholder Actions

The following actions are required in order to address the issues raised within this risk assessment document. They have been defined in subsections relevant to each of the identified Stakeholders, namely Visitors/Worshippers, Priests, Kitchen/Cleaning Staff, Volunteers/Trustees, Teachers/Students, and Contractors/Sub-contractors. If you feel you do not belong to one of these stakeholder categories then you MUST seek guidance from the SGB Appointed Trustees before attending.

The Actions MUST be publicised and provided to the relevant stakeholders.

Visitors/Worshippers:

The following will be communicated to Visitors/Worshippers by the appointed trustees.

- Reduced opening hours will be in place from 10am-12pm and 5pm-7pm daily (apart from festival days where extended hours may be applicable) and visitors/worshippers should not stay for longer than absolutely necessary.
- If you can, face coverings should be worn whilst in the SGB unless you have a legitimate reason not to wear one as advised by the NHS guidelines. This includes (but is not limited to):
 - young children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
 - not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
 - if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
 - if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
 - to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
 - to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
 - to eat or drink if reasonably necessary
 - in order to take medication
 - if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering
- Tuesday/Sunday weekly Poojas have been temporarily suspended.
- Maximum capacity will be determined based on the latest government guidance at the time.
- Hand washing as per NHS guidelines is mandatory immediately upon entry.
- NHS Track and Trace QR codes are available for use with the NHS Covid-19 App for track and trace purposes.
- Options for e-Donations (QR codes and contactless card terminal) are provided.
- A one-way system has been implemented, details of which are available by signage and a map.
- Individuals should avoid touching property belonging to others.
- Prasad (edible donations) must only be single items of fruit (apples, bananas, etc) or prepacked items (wrapped sweets, sealed mithai boxes, etc). Loose prasad such as halwa, karaa prasad, or loose mithai is not to be served. Prasad must only be collected from the dedicated collection point and hands must be sanitised/washed before handling.
- No Murtis can be touched, including the Shivalinga.
- When doing darshan, you should remain standing (Namaskar style, no forehead touching the floor).
- Bells/gongs/shank/microphones/musical instruments will not be available to worshippers, and worshippers should not sing Aarti or Bhajans aloud.
- 1m distancing will be mandatory between individuals and householders/support bubbles as per government guidelines. Families must stay together, including children.

- 1m spaced squares will be marked on the floor to aid social distancing. One complete empty square must be maintained between individuals or householders/support bubbles if all are wearing face coverings.
- 2m distancing i.e. TWO complete empty squares must be maintained between individuals or householders/support bubbles if NOT wearing face coverings.
- Vulnerable people as defined by the NHS guidelines as well as those over 70 years of age are recommended NOT to attend.
- If you are feeling unwell, have any Covid symptoms, or if you have been in contact with anyone who is showing Covid symptoms, then you and your household/support bubbles MUST NOT come to SGB.
- If during your visit you start to feel unwell with COVID symptoms, you MUST inform the priest or any member of staff/trustee to identify yourself and IMMEDIATELY return to your home to self-isolate as per government advice. The worship hall will be evacuated and will be thereafter closed for visitors until a deep clean has been carried out and a further risk assessment has been carried out.

Priests:

The following will be communicated to the Priests by the appointed trustees.

- 2m distancing from visitors/worshippers must be maintained at all times, but may be reduced to 1m if the visitors/worshippers are using face coverings.
- 1m distancing shall be maintained from SGB volunteers, trustees, and staff unless absolutely necessary.
- Face masks are mandatory unless you have a legitimate reason not to wear one as advised by the NHS guidelines.
- Tuesday/Sunday poojas are temporarily suspended.
- Live streaming services will be carried out with the assistance of Volunteers/Trustees.
- Microphones, Bells, Gongs and Musical instruments that are not blown into may be used provided they are wiped down with an anti-bacterial wipe before and after use.
- Single small group of singers will be allowed to perform only where essential to an act of communal worship. A plexi-glass screen or face shield must be utilised by the person during singing, or 2m social distancing along with face coverings may be used. Audio levels should not be at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting.
- Aarti will be carried out by the Priests and each will use a specific Aarti plate/jyoti.
- The Shank or any other blown into instruments shall NOT be used.
- Tilak or Mauli will not be applied or tied by the priests.
- A minimal amount of Amrit may be scattered but hands MUST be sanitised or washed as per NHS guidelines immediately prior to scattering.
- Prasad (edible donations) must only be single items of fruit (apples, bananas, etc) or prepacked items (wrapped sweets, sealed mithai boxes, etc). Loose prasad such as halwa, karaa prasad, or loose mithai is not to be served. Prasad must only be collected from the dedicated collection point and hands must be sanitised/washed before handling.
- Ladies and Gents toilets will be closed off, and the Disabled toilets will ONLY be made available.
- Visitors/worshippers should be discouraged from staying longer than absolutely necessary.
- If the priests are feeling unwell, have any Covid symptoms, or if you have been in contact with anyone who is showing Covid symptoms, then the priest and their household/support bubbles MUST NOT come to the SGB.
- If a priest starts to feel unwell with COVID symptoms whilst at the SGB, he must IMMEDIATELY return home to self-isolate as per government advice and the SGB evacuated. In this situation the SGB will be completely closed until a deep clean can be carried out.
- Rapid lateral flow tests are recommended to be used twice a week by the Priests.

Kitchen and Cleaning Staff:

The following will be communicated to the Kitchen and Cleaning Staff by the appointed trustees.

- Kitchen and servery areas must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before preparation of any langer (food). Cleaning schedules will be date and time logged.
- Mandatory Face masks and gloves/aprons. No EXCEPTIONS, even when socially distancing.
- 2m distancing shall be maintained unless absolutely necessary.
- Prasad (edible donations) must only be single items of fruit or pre-packed items. Prasad must only be collected from the dedicated collection point and hands must be sanitised/washed before handling.
- Ladies and Gents toilets will be closed off, and the Disabled toilets will ONLY be made available.
- Cleaning staff must thoroughly clean the disabled toilets regularly (based on usage, i.e. more often during busy periods) which will be time and date logged, and sign will be displayed on the toilet door to indicate its availability.
- Additional training may be required if identified.
- A temperature check of all kitchen staff must be carried out upon entry to the kitchen and should not be over 37.8°C.
- Kitchen staff must keep a record of kitchen and servery usage, including dates and times, with records to be kept for at least 15 days.
- If any staff are feeling unwell, have any Covid symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone who is showing Covid symptoms, then the staff member and their household/support bubbles MUST NOT come to SGB.
- If any staff start to feel unwell with COVID symptoms whilst at the SGB, they must IMMEDIATELY return home to self-isolate as per government advice and the SGB evacuated. In this situation the SGB will be completely closed until a deep clean can be carried out.
- Rapid lateral flow tests are recommended to be used twice a week by the Kitchen Staff.

Teachers/Students:

The following will be communicated to Teachers and Students by the appointed trustees.

- Teachers should wear a face covering or full-face shield, unless you have a legitimate reason not to wear one as advised by the NHS guidelines.
- 2m distancing must be maintained by the teacher at all times, but may be reduced to 1m for short durations only if the teacher is wearing a face covering.
- 2m distancing between all students must be maintained at all times unless the students are part of one household/support bubble. Back-to-back or side-to-side positioning (rather than face-to-face) is to be used by the socially distanced students whenever possible.
- Face coverings are not required for children participating in the classes as per Public Health England recommendation.
- Hand washing as per NHS guidelines is mandatory immediately upon entry and prior to class.
- A temperature check of all students must be carried out upon entry to the class and should not be over 37.8°C.
- Maximum class size will be no more than 15 children and the same group of children should be maintained for each class.
- Teachers must keep a record of class attendance per group of children, including dates and times of classes, with records to be kept for at least 15 days.
- Individuals should avoid touching property belonging to others, including shoes which should be placed in the shoe racks upon entry and collected by their owner from the rear of the shoe racks upon exit.
- The classroom should be ventilated as best as possible by opening windows/doors.
- Students must bring and use their own stationery/teaching aids. Teaching notes should be provided electronically where possible, and any teaching aids must be wiped down with anti-bacterial wipes before and after use.
- If you are feeling unwell, have any Covid symptoms, or if you have been in contact with anyone who is showing Covid symptoms, then you and your household/support bubbles MUST NOT come to SGB.
- If during your class you start to feel unwell with COVID symptoms, you MUST inform the teacher or priest, or any member of staff/trustee to identify yourself and IMMEDIATELY return to your home and call NHS 119 to get Covid tested. The classroom will be evacuated and thereafter closed for further classes until a deep clean has been carried out and a further risk assessment has been carried out.

Volunteers/Trustees:

The following will be communicated to Volunteers/Trustees by the appointed trustees.

- Donation boxes must be completely self-contained and will be emptied after waiting at least 48 hours after any donation. Gloves must also be worn and disposed of after the emptying process.
- Visitor registration slips must be kept safe in line with GDPR regulations and safely destroyed after 21 days.
- Electronic payments for donations will be encouraged and preferred.
- Volunteers/Trustees are to come forward to help enforce this guidance.
- Small social/tea gatherings will not be allowed.
- 1m social distancing shall be maintained unless absolutely necessary.
- Face masks are mandatory.
- Live streaming services will be carried out with the assistance of Volunteers/Trustees.
- Visitors/worshippers should be discouraged from staying longer than absolutely necessary.
- Microphones, Bells, Gongs and Musical instruments that are not blown into may be used provided they are wiped down with an anti-bacterial wipe before and after use.
- Only one person may sing at a time and a plexi-glass screen or face shield should be utilised by the person during singing. Audio levels should not be at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting.
- Prasad (edible donations) must only be single items of fruit (apples, bananas, etc) or prepacked items (wrapped sweets, sealed mithai boxes, etc). Loose prasad such as halwa, karaa prasad, or loose mithai is not to be served. Prasad must only be collected from the dedicated collection point and hands must be sanitised/washed before handling.
- Ladies and Gents toilets will be closed off, and the Disabled toilets will ONLY be made available.
- If any Volunteer/Trustee are feeling unwell, have any Covid symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone who is showing Covid symptoms, then the volunteer/trustee and their household/support bubbles MUST NOT come to SGB.
- If any Volunteer/Trustee start to feel unwell with COVID symptoms whilst at the SGB, they must IMMEDIATELY return home to self-isolate as per government advice and the SGB evacuated. In this situation the SGB will be completely closed until a deep clean can be carried out.
- Rapid lateral flow tests are recommended to be used twice a week by Trustees and Volunteers.

Contractors/Sub-Contractors

The following will be communicated to Contractors/Sub-contractors by the appointed trustees.

- Face Masks are strongly recommended to be worn at all times whilst in the SGB unless their work cannot be carried out with facemasks, in which case other suitable PPE must be used. If this is still impractical then a distance of 2m MUST be maintained from anybody else.
- 1m distancing shall be maintained unless absolutely necessary.
- Small social/tea gatherings will not be allowed.
- Contractors will NOT be allowed into the publicly open main prayer hall during the reduced opening hours that are open to visitors.
- Contractors must have their own specific risk assessment and is to be provided to the SGB appointed trustees for verification and permission to work on site.
- If any contractors are feeling unwell, have any Covid symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone who is showing Covid symptoms, then the contractor and their household/support bubbles MUST NOT come to SGB.
- If any contractors start to feel unwell with COVID symptoms whilst at the SGB, they must IMMEDIATELY return home to self-isolate as per government advice and the SGB evacuated. In this situation the SGB will be completely closed until a deep clean can be carried out.
- Contractors will be requested to carry out a basic health check of their staff.

Risk Assessment - Covid 19

Shree Geeta Bhawan

Assessment carried out by: Dr Arun Sinha and Kashav Sehra

Overall supervision and inspection: Mukesh Kumar Murria

Date assessment was carried out: ___ / ___ / ___

Date of next review: ___ / ___ / ___

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Covid-19 - contagious infection may be passed on	Everyone at SGB	See Risk Assessment document	Keep assessment under monthly review	Dr Arun Sinha and/or Kashav Sehra	Monthly	
Donation money may be infected	Trustees	Self-contained donation boxes	Gloves used to empty and only after 48 hours. Electronic donations are to be encouraged.	Treasurer	Bi-weekly to Monthly	
Worship hall might get busy/congested	Everyone at SGB	Signs and floor zones placed for 1m distancing	Check the floor signs are still clear and secure.	Dr Arun Sinha and/or Kashav Sehra	Weekly	
People may bring in viruses when entering	Visitors, Priests, Trustees, Volunteers, Cleaners	Shoes removed and hand wash sink with anti-bac soap is available	Check signs are visible, sink/shoe racking is clean, soap is not empty.	Dr Arun Sinha and/or Kashav Sehra. Cleaners.	Weekly check and daily cleaning.	
Visitors may get too close to others.	Visitors, Priests, Trustees, Volunteers,	One-way system is implemented	Check the map and signs are still visible.	Dr Arun Sinha and/or Kashav Sehra	Weekly	
Food/drink may carry the virus	Visitors, Priests,	Individual items of Prasad only	Maintain Prasad handling procedures.	Priests, Trustees, and Volunteers.	Ongoing.	
Hand held items may carry the virus.	Visitors, Priests, Trustees, Volunteers,	Aarti trays will be specific for each pandit ji.	Regular hand washing by when in contact with day to day items at the temple.	Priests, Trustees, and Volunteers.	Ongoing.	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Toilet usage may transfer the virus	All at SGB	Minimise usage, and clean regularly	Cleaning and logging based on usage.	Cleaners	After every use	
Priests will be at the temple for long durations	Priests	Reducing operation hours	Masks to be mandated, promote live streaming services,	Priests	Daily	
Cleaners may be at high risk due to cleaning activities	Cleaners	Mandatory PPE	Twice weekly Lateral Flow Test	Cleaners	Weekly	
Trustees and Volunteers may be at high risk due to volunteering	Volunteers and Trustees	Mandatory face masks	Twice weekly Lateral Flow Test	Volunteers and Trustees	Weekly	
Some religious traditions may be risky	Priests, Visitors, Volunteers, Trustees,	No shank sounding. No tilak or mauli to be applied.	No further action required.			
Priest Consultations	Priests, Visitors	Minimal times. 1m distancing. Essential consultations only.	Twice weekly Lateral Flow Test	Priests	Weekly	
Kitchen may be a hotspot for the virus	Kitchen Staff, Cleaners, Trustees, Volunteers	Regular kitchen cleaning	Twice weekly Lateral Flow Test	Dr Sinha		
Contractors may carry the virus due to the nature of their work	Contractors, Sub-contractors, Trustees,	Contractors not allowed in the worship hall during opening hours.	Check the builders have their up to date risk assessment based on the task in hand.	Dr Arun Sinha and/or Kashav Sehra	As and when required	

More information on managing risk: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/