

Guidelines for use of Augustine United Church following the Coronavirus lockdown

AUC takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously and church staff and trustees will do everything they can to keep building users safe during these uncertain times. To help us do this, we need all our users to comply with these guidelines when using the building. Use of the church building will look quite different to pre-pandemic times and we ask for your patience as we all navigate a different way of operating.

The booking process

New bookings can be made in the usual way, via email (centre.manager@augustine.org.uk), telephone (0131 2201677) or the enquiry form on the website (augustine.org.uk/room-hire/booking-enquiry/).

Existing bookings have been retained in our diary and, once the building is fully open, we will endeavour to contact all groups with an existing booking to ascertain if it is going ahead or not. We are not operating a strict cancellation policy at this time but we reserve the right to issue a charge if a group fails to arrive for a booking they have said is going ahead.

For both new and existing bookings, the Centre Manager will contact event organisers to establish the details of the event and ensure that booking contracts are in place. We may ask you to alter your start time slightly if we have simultaneous groups arriving in the building and need to stagger arrivals.

We will require you to have a registration system in place for your event so that you know how many people will be attending. Numbers of people allowed into the building at any one time will be severely restricted due to physical distancing guidelines so it will be essential for us to know how many people are anticipated. Event organisers will need to operate a monitoring system on the day so they have a record of who is in the building during their event.

In order to comply with the Scottish Government's Test and Protect scheme, AUC will require you to share your register of attendees with us. We will need contact details for each individual so we can contact building users in the event that someone becomes unwell with Covid-19 or a case is traced to our building. We will only keep these contact details for a period of 4 weeks, as mandated by the Scottish Government.

Last, but by no means least, we need you to stress to your group that if they are experiencing any of the symptoms of Covid-19 they should stay home and not attend your event.

Entrance to the building

There will only ever be a maximum of two groups in our building at one time – one on the upper (Sanctuary) level and one on the lower (Studio) level. At the times when both levels are in use simultaneously, we will operate different entrances and exits for each group to ensure that the two groups are kept separate. We may also ask you to alter the start time of your event slightly if we feel we need to stagger arrivals of different groups.

If your event is taking place in the Sanctuary, you will enter (and exit) the building through the main front doors. If your event is taking place in the Studio, you will enter (and exit) the building through the south stairwell door – located to the right of the main doors.

Hygiene

Hand sanitiser will be available at each entrance/exit to the building, along with signs to hand washing facilities.

Stewarding

In order to prevent people having to touch multiple door handles, we will try to wedge all non-fire doors open, at least during your group's arrival and departure. This will include the front doors which obviously

presents us with a security risk if left unattended. We will require all groups to nominate a door steward to monitor (and record on their attendance list) their group's arrival and departure and to ensure that the front doors are closed and locked behind them once the group has safely arrived/departed.

Room layouts

Room layout options will be limited in all our rooms while 2m physical distancing is still in place and capacities will be significantly reduced.

Sanctuary – 40 people, including 6 in the gallery. The Sanctuary layout on the ground floor is comprised of 17 blocks of 2 chairs meaning that the maximum number of 40 can only attend if your group comprises 17 same-household couples. Should all your attendees arrive individually your maximum number will be 23.

Studio – 18 people seated in the rake plus 3 on the stage and 1 at the tech desk – 22 in total

Mull – 6 people in a 'circle' or seated at an 'exploded' board table (8 can technically be squeezed in but it involves chairs being incredibly close to the door/walls)

Iona – 6 people in a 'circle' or seated at an 'exploded' board table

Once your room has been set for your event, you must not move the furniture without first consulting a caretaker.

Audio visual systems

Our usual AV system in the Sanctuary is in the process of being upgraded to include the ability to live stream your event to people watching/participating at home. Cameras will give a variety of angles and the presentation being shown on the screens in the Sanctuary can also be streamed direct to people's screens at home. We intend to ensure that the operation of the system is as simple as possible so that, after an appropriate number of training sessions, building users can operate the technology themselves. This means we can offer this service free of charge but it must be booked in advance through the Centre Manager so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Refreshments

I'm afraid that at this time, we don't feel able to allow building users to prepare refreshments in the pantry as they would normally do. We will keep this policy under review and hope to lift the restrictions as soon as it is safe to do so.

Cancellation by AUC

Should the church building be required to close for 72 hours in response to a case of COVID-19 being traced to the building, AUC will cancel all affected bookings, refund any applicable hire fees and assist the group in arranging a suitable alternative venue.

Physical distancing

You will see signs and floor markings around the church reminding you to keep a 2m distance from fellow users – please abide by these.

Building cleaning

We will be operating an enhanced cleaning schedule in the building, including increased cleaning of toilets and frequently touched surfaces like door handles and light switches. All chairs, tables and microphones (if used) will be disinfected between each group.

We will also position 'clean as you go' stations in the toilets and other public spaces to enable building users to disinfect as they feel necessary/able.