



OMAR FARUQUE MOSQUE AND CULTURAL CENTRE

MANAGING THE RISKS - STEP 4 LIFTING OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

15th July 2021

Bismillahir rahmanir rahim

Respected members of the community,

As you may well be aware the government road map on lifting the current restrictions and moving to step 4 was announced on Monday 12th of July 2021. The government confirmed the step 4 of the road map is to go ahead as planned on Monday 19th July. However the government also emphasised caution and personal responsibility as cases continue to rise along with number of people dying. The government believes the ongoing vaccination programme has weakened the link between hospitalisation and death, but expects infection rate, hospitalisation and deaths will continue to rise over the coming weeks and months.

The latest announcement obviously presents us with a challenge amidst rising infection rates. On one hand to manage people's expectations and on the other managing the risks posed by the virus, especially in large gatherings in closed environments such as Jumu'ah and Eid. We also are aware of our need to remain within the laws of the country and any rules and guidance prepared does not go against the laws of the land. However as a responsible committee we must take a balanced approach weighing up all the evidence and potential risks and people's right to freedom of worship.

The actions and guidance outlined in this document is prepared after extensive discussions with our members and other local mosque representatives and consideration of the guidance published by the Muslim Council of Britain including the latest data of Covid -19 infection rates both locally and nationally. We believe the following guidance and actions going forward from the 19th July are balanced, cautious and pragmatic and will minimise the risks.

Foremost we all have to be cautious at all times and we have to take responsibility for the safety and well being of all around us especially the most vulnerable amongst us.

Although social distancing measures will be lifted from the 19th July we believe the continuing of wearing a face mask and bringing your own prayer mat will mitigate some of the risks and give confidence to our brothers and fellow worshippers. Bringing your own shoe bag will also minimise contact and overcrowding at the exit. At a time when infection rates are rising and death numbers increasing we must do all we can to protect us and others.

Based on the governments' insistence to act responsibly and to take all precautions we therefore propose the following guidance for all interested parties to act upon. The Mosque committee will strongly encourage all to:

- Do Wudu at home
- Wear a face covering at all times within the Mosque premises
- Bring own prayer mats
- Bring a shoe bag for shoes

Furthermore the Mosque Committee will endeavour to provide:

- Hand sanitizers to be used on entry and exit
- Provide Mask to those who may have forgotten
- Provide Paper sheets to those without prayer mats
- Provide antibacterial wipes for washroom and Wudu facilities for wiping surfaces before and after use
- Provide paper towels for drying

The Mosque committee will reopen from 19th July the washroom and wudhu facilities. However due to the limited space within the washroom and wudhu area and the high level of risk associated with close contact in wet areas the committee will encourage worshippers the use their facilities at home and to come with wudhu to the mosque at all times.

To safeguard the most vulnerable and those who wish to pray with social distancing the Mosque committee will allocate a space for them to do so. In this case the small room will be kept vacant for this purpose.

To minimise overcrowding and to give everyone an opportunity to pray Jumu'ah in a safe environment, minimising risks the committee will continue to arrange two Jumu'ah sessions until further notice. The expectation will be to see a good split of worshipers between the two sessions; however its success will be monitored. The Increased capacity due to the removal of social distancing and the continuation of two Jumu'ah sessions means no worshipper should need to pre book. So going forward the Mosque committee will operate on a first come first served basis for Jumu'ah and other large gatherings such as Eid and Nikha ceremonies. However the situation will be closely monitored taking into risk factors such as overcrowding and infections levels in the community and beyond and advice and take action accordingly.

The Committee will encourage all worshippers to keep time spent in the Mosque to a minimum and space between each other to a maximum where possible.

As we enter a new phase in our battle against this virus we cannot over emphasise the need for all of us to be cautious and take personal responsibility. We are all in this together and we must work together to reduce the risk posed by this virus. We have all gained much experience in managing our behaviour over the last year and a half and we will continue to do so in the interest of ourselves and our loved ones.

Finally we must not lose sight of the fact we are in an uptrend of infections and deaths and this will continue for sometime. We can only advise and provide you with information as are available to us and it is ultimately up to you take responsibility. We remind you of the devastation COVID-19 had already caused to the BAME group which we are part of and to the most vulnerable including the elderly and to those with underlying health issues.

The Omar Faruque Mosque and Cultural Centre are taking the necessary precautions to promote the safety and well-being of all worshippers. If you have concerns about your health or are unable to comply with the guidance above, please do not attend prayers at the Mosque and Centre. We ask for your patience, cooperation and understanding as our community addresses the extraordinary circumstances of this pandemic.

COVID-19 Disclaimers

PLEASE NOTE:

- COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death.
- There is an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 that exists in public places, such as the Omar Faruque Mosque and Cultural Centre, where people are present and congregate.
- By visiting the Omar Faruque Mosque and Cultural Centre, **you are knowingly and voluntarily assuming all the risks related to exposure to COVID-19.**

Executive Committee

Omar Faruque Mosque and Cultural Centre