



# Highcliffe Residents' Association Community Interest Company

## Guidance for Users of The Old School during the COVID-19 crisis as at 16.8.2020

As from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020, it has become possible to use The Old School for limited purposes in connection with committees and meetings of HRA and its tenant organisations. Some hall hires can also be made for activities permitted under the Government's COVID-19 restrictions.

Meeting organisers should ensure compliance with Government guidelines, including the preparation of COVID Risk Assessments, social distancing, sanitising, ventilation of rooms, maintaining attendance records that may be required by NHS Test and Trace, etc. HRA officers will assist as far as possible with making the premises suitable for use, but it is the responsibility of the meeting organiser to comply with all official guidelines for his/her meeting.

The following guidance applies to all users of the building during these difficult times.

### **1. Access**

The front door should be used only for entry (except that those with mobility problems will need to use this as their exit, as will the last person to leave and lock the building).

The rear fire exit door from the North end of the Small Hall should be used as the only exit (except for the disabled and the last person to leave). Note that it has steps down to the ground outside.

The emergency exit at the North-West corner of the main hall should be used only in real emergencies, for example, in the case of fire (except for members of Men's Sheds who require level access to their premises in the Lower Hall).

### **2. Use of Halls**

All meetings should be held in the Main Hall, no matter how small, as that Hall can be well ventilated. The lower parts of the two central sash windows should

be raised for good ventilation. This can be enhanced by creating a through draught if the entry doors are kept open or ajar. Please do not use the third window as it is out of order at the moment.

The Small Hall should be kept available as the “safe room” into which anyone who falls ill can immediately be isolated and cared for by someone wearing PPE (at least mask and gloves) until arrangements can be made to get them home. Note that a record of people with whom they may have been in contact may be needed in the next few weeks by NHS Test and Trace.

### **3. Social Distancing and Face Coverings**

Event organisers should ensure that participants follow the marked one-way system as far as possible. When this is not feasible (e.g. to access the toilet, or for a disabled person to exit via the front door), extra care is required to ensure that correct social distancing is maintained. This is particularly the case in the corridor in front of the Parish Council Office.

Organisers should set out chairs (and tables if required) in the Main Hall with at least 1 metre between chairs if side-by-side, and at least two metres if facing each other. Organisers should monitor social interactions when participants are not seated, to ensure correct social distancing.

As from 8 August 2020, Government restrictions require users of community buildings to wear face masks at all times unless special exemptions apply. This applies to The Old School, and event organisers should make arrangements accordingly.

### **4. Toilets**

The main toilet near the front door should normally be the only one used.

The toilet block at the South-East corner of the Main Hall should not normally be used during the COVID-19 crisis, to reduce the constant need for sanitising. If it has to be used in an emergency, or for nappy-changing, then it must subsequently be thoroughly sanitised.

### **5. Preparation**

Before an event, organisers should ensure that they all know the location of:

- the two fire blankets (in kitchenette, and in the Lower Hall, used only by Men’s Shed)
- the seven fire extinguishers (at various obvious points throughout the building)
- the four fire alarm points, and the fire alarm control panel (by the front door)
- the First Aid box and Accident Report Book (in the kitchenette).

All touchable surfaces and fittings should be sanitised, including backs of chairs, tables (if used), doorknobs and press-plates, and electrical fittings (like light switches). Note that electrical fittings should not be sprayed with bactericide, to avoid damage or possible short-circuit – they should simply be wiped with a sanitised paper towel or tissue.

If several participants are expected, an organiser should stand near the open entry door to admit them with good social distancing. Any queue which might consequently form outside the building should be monitored to maintain appropriate social distancing. All participants should sanitise their hands when entering the Main Hall.

## **6. Refreshments**

No food or drink should be served, and participants should be urged to bring their own if required, and to ensure that all litter, empty bottles etc. are taken home.

It should not normally be necessary to use the kitchenette, but if drinking water from the mains is needed, it is available only from the kitchenette tap (and any users should supply their own receptacles).

## **7. After the event**

A further round of sanitising should be carried out wherever people have been present, including the toilet.

The main organiser should then be the last person to leave. They should check that:

- chairs and tables have been safely stacked away
- the rear exit door is firmly closed
- all windows have been closed (and secured if possible)
- all internal doors are left closed
- no taps are left running, and - if the external tap has been used - its stopcock by the toilet bowl is closed
- all lights are off (except for the one over the steps leading down to the emergency exit by the Lower Hall)
- rubbish created during the event is taken away (there is no municipal rubbish collection at The Old School).

They should finally exit via the front door, ensuring that the RH panel is firmly bolted at top and bottom, and that the LH panel is then firmly closed from the outside, and locked with the key.

Richard Reader  
on behalf of the Directors of HRA CIC  
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