



WESTBOURNE GROVE CHURCH: SUITABLE USE POLICY

SUITABLE USE OF ROOMS IN THE CHURCH

The church is a Christian community, and the main purpose of the building is for worship and for the congregation to share their Christian way of life with the wider community. We hold the Christian message in high regard in our lifestyle and use of the building. So our terms of use state that activities should not conflict with the Christian faith of the church. This is also a legal requirement of the trust deed of the church property. Decisions on what is suitable use are made by the WGC trustees and their decision is final.

POLICY ON RELIGION, ETHNICITY, LIFESTYLE

Our policy is to welcome visitors and building users without regard to religion, ethnicity, and lifestyle. However, events with content from other religions are deemed not appropriate. Activities may not include spiritual practices or traditions that are not specifically Christian. Also, events with immoral, explicit or occult themes are not appropriate. We respect that cultural or community events may include simple introductory and closing prayers from other faiths and can usually give permission on request. We regret that religious teaching, worship, and practice, formal meetings, and group prayer from religious groups who are not Christian cannot be accepted. If in doubt about appropriate themes and decoration content, please discuss your plans with the church.

POLICY ON WELLBEING / HEALTH ACTIVITIES

We receive many enquiries for space for activities which promote physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. We decline requests where the activity or material being used may be perceived to conflict with the church's own message of Christian faith and belief. Christians look to God as the source of wisdom, liberty, love, peace, healing, self-understanding, unselfishness etc. Many self-development and wellbeing groups have messages which present different viewpoints, and potentially conflict with these teachings. We regret that where the group's message might be perceived to conflict with Christian beliefs, we will decline the application because we hold the faith message we communicate as a church so dearly that we would not want to cause any confusion about the church's beliefs. This includes activities which may have origins in other religious traditions, such as meditation, ecstatic dance, and martial arts or yoga with spiritual practice. Also, the use of incense, chanting, spiritual images, or prayers that are outside the Christian tradition.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

The church recognises that alternative therapies address a wide range of problems and that many find benefit from them. However, many alternative therapies contain varying elements of science, belief, and spirituality, some of which might conflict with the church's values. It

WGC Suitable Use Policy

Revised Mar 23

Next review due: Mar 2024

<https://westbournegrovechurch.org.sharepoint.com/sites/WGCShare2/Shared Documents/11. Lettings incl. policies/3.Contracts and, T&Cs/1. Terms & Conditions for customers and website/Suitable Use Policy.docx>

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would not be reasonable for the church to enquire into the content of sessions and to dictate to practitioners about what is suitable. So, the church has decided that it should respectfully decline enquiries for alternative therapy spaces. Examples of alternative therapies in this category include Reiki, Homeopathy, hypnotherapy, alternative medicines, healing crystals and Hopi candles. For similar reasons the church declines bookings for psychotherapy, motivational speaking, and other belief system interventions.

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Alternative clinical practice can have well proven benefits. However, we feel that our general use spaces are not suitable for most clinical practices including acupuncture. We can consider bookings for physical practices which are in general use by the NHS in a public setting, such as physiotherapy and ante-natal training. Any medical related bookings must be made by a recognised mainstream charity or company in the field and cannot be for the sale of products or services. We cannot accept bookings from individual practitioners.

BUSINESS HIRE

Seminars, conferences, product launch, training, public performance, filming, are charged at commercial rates. Commercial selling from the premises (fairs, product sales) is not generally allowed, except where there is a substantial focus on fair trade, charitable benefit, or other ethical purpose. By negotiation the church may agree use for product showcase and range launch where sales on the day is not the primary purpose. The hirer shall, if selling goods on the premises, comply with all relevant fair-trading laws and any local codes of practice issued in connection with such sales.

PARTY AND OTHER BOOKINGS: ENTERTAINMENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT MIGHT CAUSE DAMAGE TO THE BUILDING OR ITS CONTENTS, OR FOR WHICH THE BUILDING HAS NOT BEEN SUITABLY CONSTRUCTED.

No use that causes damage, alterations or variations to the structure, electrical services, fittings, or existing decorations of the WGC venue, are permitted.

Many people booking parties, events, and regular classes etc. in the building wish to include entertainers or activities which are likely to have an impact upon the fabric of the building or on its contents. The building is also physically unsuitable for some activities. The following activities are therefore either deemed unsuitable or have restrictions applied to them:

UNSUITABLE

- Disco parties due to sound restrictions
- The use of balls/softballs is not permitted in the building. The venue is therefore not suitable for football parties or similar.
- Roller Disco parties as they damage the floor.
- No paper confetti are allowed in the main hall, including confetti rockets as these cause expensive damage to the timber floor.
- No indoor Fireworks: home-made rockets are not permitted to be fired on the premises as chemical sprays have damaged surfaces in the past. Indoor fireworks set off the fire alarms and disturb the neighbours.
- No naked flames (except small birthday cake candles, and tea lights in heat protective holders). Catering burners must be smoke free and not overheat the table surface.

- No smoke machines, dry ice machines, flares, sparklers and similar: set off the fire alarms and disturb the neighbours.
- No alterations or variations are permitted to the structure, electrical services, fittings, or existing decorations of the WGC venue.
- No bouncy castle use in the small hall due to height restrictions.

SUITABLE BUT WITH RESTRICTIONS

- Go Carting, Roller Blades and other similar activities are only permitted where floor protection is provided by the contractor.
- Mad Science / messy play activities /face painting: Surfaces must be protected from chemical and other damage. Black cloth covered church chairs may not be used in conjunction with messy activities. See also restrictions on the use of naked flames, flares, smoke machines etc.
- Graffiti parties: Surfaces must be protected from chemical and other damage. Ventilation requirements must be discussed to ensure the safety of participants, and to prevent the fire alarm being set off.
- Cooking parties: children are not allowed in the kitchens. Suitable protection must be provided for surfaces. Black cloth covered church chairs may not be used in conjunction with messy activities.
- Painting/crafts/ messy activities: protection must be provided for surfaces and suitable time allowed for clear-up. Black cloth covered church chairs may not be used in conjunction with messy activities.
- Use of naked flames: only small birthday cake candles, and tea lights in heat protective holders. Catering burners must be smoke free and not overheat the table surface.
- Bouncy castle parties in the Main Hall only.
- WGC is committed to complying with all legal restrictions and government guidance with respect to Covid. All activities must comply with current government guidelines and restrictions.

ADVERTISING OF CLASSES /EVENTS AND INFORMATION SUPPLIED FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY

All advertising of classes /events, or information supplied for public display, must be approved in advance by the church. Activities, information and advertising may not include references to spiritual practices or traditions that are not specifically Christian. Advertising and information should not reflect an intention to carry out activities on the church premises that are in conflict with the WGC Suitable Use policy. Promotion of classes or events on the Internet or social media should be consistent with the approved advertising.

OTHER GENERAL USE RESTRICTIONS

- The premises may not be used for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful way. Nor may building users do anything or bring onto the premises anything which may endanger the premises, their users, or any insurance policies relating thereto.
- The premises may only be used for activities currently permitted by UK government Covid guidance and law and must be conducted in accordance with the Covid Security guidelines provided by the UK government for that activity. See WGC Regular Booking / Party / Events terms and conditions for further information.

- For health and safety reasons it is not allowed for the hirer to use their own electrical equipment or plant in the premises without prior written consent from WGC. Evidence of a current PAT test for the equipment will be required in order for permission to be granted to bring the equipment onto the premises.
- WGC is a no smoking and no vaping venue.
- The church is not suitable as a loud music venue. Westminster City Council has a very strict noise policy and WGC is situated under residential flats and within a residential area. We wish to be considerate to our neighbours and so we therefore restrict the playing of music and noise levels as follows.

Main Hall should not exceed the following sound levels:

General use: amplified sound 87 dBA 9.00 am 10.30pm - all music must be switched off by 10.30 pm.

(Limited Event use, by agreement, and with In-house PA operators present: amplified sound 92 dBA Friday/Saturday up to 11pm – all music must be switched off by 11.00 pm)

Small Hall should not exceed:

Amplified sound 80 dBA 9am – 9.00 pm - all music must be switched off by 9.00 pm

WGC has equipment to measure dBA levels and reserves the right to judge acceptable levels of noise.

No music must be played whilst any outside doors are open. All instructions by WGC staff about limiting disturbance to neighbours must be adhered to.

We may also need to restrict impact activities in the main hall to limit sound transmission through the floor and building structure to the upstairs neighbours. Impact vibration can cause disturbance to neighbours and may mean that some types of exercise and dance are not suitable for our main hall. Trial sessions can be agreed evaluate impact disturbance.

Because we have residential neighbours, we consider it very important that our customers supervise the orderly and safe admission and departure of persons to and from the property, including the orderly exit of guests. This particularly applies to late night events.

- The building has the following maximum capacity limits and is therefore not suitable for bookings expecting greater numbers attending their event/party/booking.

Ground floor 170 (200 lecture style / legal escape limit for room)

First floor 75 (100 lecture style / legal escape limit for room).

If the number of guests is not predefined the hirer is responsible for limiting the numbers to comply with the legal maximum capacities, if necessary, by counting guests in and out of the building.