

SIKH DOCTORS ASSOCIATION

Celebrating Gurburab safely in the second lockdown.

Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji's Gurburab (551st birth anniversary) is on Monday November 30th 2020.

Under the current lockdown (November 5th to December 2nd), Gurdwaras **do not need to fully close** under the restrictions in place, but **they may open** only for a limited range of activities and events.

See full guidance here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

What can a gurdwara do:

A Gurdwara CAN OPEN during lockdown for :

- Key workers to maintain the core duties, such as Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji parkash and sukhasan
- Sangat can attend the Gurdwara for individual prayer only. A person, or single household, can enter the Gurdwara to pray on their own and not as part of a group
- Broadcasting or filming an act of worship (such as an Akhand Paath, kirtan or katha) is permitted but should only involve those people working who are essential to the service and filming
- For formal registered childcare (as registered on the Early Years Register under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006)
- Where the place of worship is used as part of a school
- Essential voluntary and public services (such as langar for the community, not in house langar)
- For support groups that provide mutual aid, therapy and care (eg for domestic abuse). Only up to 15 people maximum.

What a Gurdwara CANNOT do:

- Led prayer from the front (such as Akhand Paath, Sehaj Paath, Sukhmani Sahib Paath)
- Communal prayer (together as a sangat)
- Weddings (with the exception of those in the exceptional circumstances of someone not expected to recover from a serious terminal illness)
- Langar consumed on site
- Exercise groups

How should a person to attend the Gurdwara at Gurpurab.

This guidance sets out how this can be done in a manner that is safe, COVID-19 secure and minimises risks around transmission of virus and exposure to infection.

1. Choose a time to visit the Gurdwara that is least busy.
2. Attend the Gurdwara for a short a time as possible.
3. If possible, walk or cycle to the gurdwara. You can take your own household car, with those in your bubble.
4. AVOID a bus, taxi or train to travel – higher chance of contact with the virus.
5. If you are planning to take a donation, purchase that donation a few days before attending (such as daal, atta bag). Avoid going to a shop on the way to the Gurdwara.
6. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds before leaving your house.
7. Maintain at least 2m social distance on the way to the Gurdwara.
8. At the Gurdwara, comply with the covid rules in place – you may have to queue before entry.
9. On entry at the gurdwara, make sure you are aware of the one-way system in place.
10. Take off your shoes and place safely on a rack as provided. Do not touch anyone else's shoes or belongings.
11. Wash your hands with soap FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS. This is the most important step.
12. Put on a clean mask and DO NOT TOUCH OR FIDDLE WITH THE MASK AGAIN UNTIL YOU LEAVE.
13. Maintain 2m social distance at all times.
14. Avoid touching your mask or your face whilst inside the Gurdwara.
15. Enter the Darbar Hall and mathatekh. Sit on the marked "cross" on the floor. Stay 2m apart from others.
16. After your individual prayer, get up and follow the arrows out of the hall.
17. Collect your parshaad in a plastic bag on your way out.
18. Put on your shoes and remove your mask.
19. Wash your hands with soap before leaving.
20. If there is congestion or a gathering ahead, stay back until the sangat flow clears.
21. Leave the Gurdwara and make your way home.
22. Avoid gathering and having conversations inside or outside the Gurdwara.
23. If you have any symptoms of covid-19, DO NOT GO TO THE GURDWARA. Book a covid test and isolate until the result.

This will ensure a safe darshan at the Gurdwara for all. Have a happy Gurpurab.

Dr Sukhdev Singh

GP and Chairman of the Sikh Doctors Association