

SEMINARY OF CHRIST THE KING

COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

SEMINARY OF CHRIST THE KING • PO BOX 3310 • MISSION, BC • V2V 4J5 • PHONE: 604-826-8715 • FAX: 604-826-8725
COLLEGE SEMINARY EMAIL: info@sck.ca • RECTOR'S EMAIL: rector.majors@sck.ca

Rationale

We have seen that in some cases the novel coronavirus COVID-19 can lead to serious illness or death and can be transmitted very quickly before its symptoms are even manifest. Because there is still no effective treatment or vaccine against it, a common effort is needed on the part of all to keep everyone safe from it, particularly those more vulnerable, such as the elderly.

Life is a gift to all who are alive. Before we come face to face with our Creator, we use this gift until he demands from us an account for it. While on earth, we have the opportunity to sow what we will reap in heaven. It is from this appreciation of the relationship of life on earth to life in heaven that we derive the value of life. Life and health are not absolute goods, it is true, but natural law also binds us to make use of the ordinary measures for preventing disease, in order to preserve our own life and the life of others. St. Thomas Aquinas puts it this way, “It is by nature that everything loves itself, so that everything conserves itself in being and resists, as far as it can, any corrupting influences.” (ST II-II, Q. 64, a. 5) The Catechism of the Catholic Church prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger (2269). This could happen if we were careless about COVID.

We live in close proximity and so need to watch out for each other. But there is also the wider community to think of. Many of us interact with local community services as well as with settings in the archdiocese as a whole. Our own COVID discipline assists those we meet to remain healthy.

Sanitary protocols and physical distancing (or wearing a mask if distancing is impossible) do call us to sacrifice our time and convenience. Yet they are good examples of how small acts of charity can go a long way in benefitting everyone. “The Lord loves a cheerful giver.” (RB 5) If we embrace these measures with a generous heart, they can be transformed from stumbling blocks to stepping stones.

The seminary setting

The Seminary of Christ the King is a community in which faculty and students all reside on campus. After the successful completion of a quarantine period, resident students are integrated into the existing core bubble of the monastic community of Westminster Abbey. From the point of view of COVID-19 safety, therefore, the school year has two phases:

Phase 1: a 14-day quarantine period after each return of seminarians from a vacation period at home; this period is lengthened only if a case of COVID-19 arises among the returning students;

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Phase 2: the subsequent period when all residents on campus form a core bubble.

In phase 1, the standard COVID-19 safety protocols of distancing, sanitising, hand washing and wearing of masks must be integrally observed between all residents. In phase 2, the COVID protocols apply integrally to campus situations involving non-residents; but in settings involving core bubble members only, distancing and wearing of masks are not required.

In what follows, the more extensive protocol of phase 1 will be laid out first, then the abbreviated protocol for phase 2.

Communication

The rector communicates guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 safety in three ways, depending on the circumstances: by email, by printed notes on the seminary bulletin board, or by verbal announcements at common activities.

PHASE 1: 14-DAY QUARANTINE PERIODS

Return of seminarians to campus

- During phase 1, each seminarian must complete a COVID-19 self-assessment daily. This can be done either with the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool (<https://bc.thrive.health/>) or with a Daily Self-Monitoring Form for COVID-19 (available on the Internet). If before returning, a seminarian does not pass the self-assessment, he must **stay at home until he has completed the necessary time of convalescence or self-monitoring**. For medical advice, contact a local medical provider or call 8-1-1.
- Anyone who develops COVID symptoms while on campus immediately informs the rector. He then uses the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool (<https://bc.thrive.health/>) and follows directions as to self-monitoring or booking a test.
- Each returning seminarian carries with him at all times a protective mask which he wears when required or when appropriate. He must also have a supply of handi-wipes for personal use.
- Course lists are sent to seminarians by email or printed by the registrar and distributed by the rector.
- Purchase of textbooks is by appointment. Seminarians access bookstore directly by way of lobby, wearing mask.

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- Payment of semester fees can be made directly to the rector, acting on behalf of the treasurer's office in this phase.
- During phase 1, the high school and lower cloister of the monastery are off-limits except for the immediate access ways to the guesthouse chapel, to the dining room or to a classroom, as will be noted below. Likewise, the library and the abbey church sacristy are off-limits.

Liturgy:

- Use guesthouse chapel for personal prayer, Office of Readings and Holy Hour. Seminarians enter by way of receiving entrance and closest door to chapel.
- Conventual Mass and Divine Office in abbey church.
- Enter and leave church by way of exterior door. Do not use lower cloister.
- Major seminarians sit in nave for Mass and in north transept for Office. They practise social distancing.
- Major seminarians do not exercise liturgical roles during quarantine period.
- Seminarians bring choir books for Mass and Office and return them to room afterwards.

Sacrament of Confession and Spiritual Direction

- A confessor will be available before the daily 6:30 am Mass on the porch near the confessionals (in warmer times) or in a room on the first floor of the guesthouse (in colder times).
- For meetings with his spiritual director, each seminarian will contact him and make arrangements for the location. They observe physical distancing and both wear masks if they are indoor.

Meals

- No major seminarian may enter the kitchen.
- In going from Mass or the Office to a meal, seminarians leave abbey church in staggered order and proceed by outside route to receiving entrance. They put on mask before entering, observe social distancing in the hallway and wash hands at sink by fountain before and after meal.
- Food carts are retrieved from the kitchen by the prefect, who belongs to the monastic core bubble. At the end of each meal, prefect and dishwashers return carts to kitchen.

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- Serving of food: waiter wears mask; he dishes up first plate for each at serving station; then, at the appropriate time, he brings drinks, seconds and dessert to tables of those who are eating.
- Dishwashers, at the end of their work session, supply table setters with all necessities for preparing the next meal.
- Seminarians wear masks except when eating.

Classrooms

- There will be seminarians from outside the core bubble in most major seminary classes. They will be assigned places in each classroom and must wear a mask in class.
- For classes in the high school building, major seminarians enter by way of north door. Other areas and facilities (e.g. washrooms and water fountain) in minor seminary are closed to major seminarians.
- Interaction with minor seminarians for teaching or meetings is suspended during phase 1.

Residence

- Only seminarians, faculty and formators are permitted inside building.
- They wash their hands with hand sanitizer provided at the handwashing station in lobby.
- Resident seminarians have access to all common rooms in building; non-resident seminarians are limited to the 4th floor, where they have their rooms for study.
- Chapel is restricted to four people at a time; they should wear mask when in chapel.
- Signs will be posted in common areas (lobby, chapel, laundry room, classrooms, parlour, rector's office, and recreation room) about number of people permitted in that space.
- Designated seminarians on a daily rotation will sanitise twice daily high-touch surfaces in residence and dining room:
 - Door handles
 - Handrails
 - Light switches
 - Telephones
 - Computer keyboards
 - Sink faucets
 - Laundry machines
 - Toaster

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Athletics and Recreation

- Team sports are suspended during phase 1 but seminarians are encouraged to get exercise, all the while observing proper distancing.
- At evening recreation, practise social distancing and wear masks. No card, board or foosball games, since surfaces are subject to being touched by various people.
- Weather permitting, go outside for recreation.

Off Campus Activities

- Seminarians should anticipate their personal needs so that they do have to leave campus in phase 1 periods. For pastoral work, they observe the standard precautions of distancing, sanitising, hand washing and masks. If they have a passenger in the car, they need to wear a mask.
- For the safety of all those in the core bubble, seminarians may not return to their family homes or frequent non-essential public places such as restaurants. Their families can visit them at the seminary, using the gymnasium or the outdoors as meeting place and observing all standard COVID protocols.

PHASE 2: AFTER SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF 14-DAY QUARANTINE

- In phase 2, campus residents observe standard COVID protocols when in the presence of non-residents (faculty, seminarians, and invited speakers) and when off-campus for personal or ministerial activities. In other settings at the seminary, distancing and wearing of masks is not required because they are only with members of the same core bubble.
- Non-residents may only come on campus if they have done their daily COVID symptom self-assessment and passed it successfully. While on campus, they observe the standard COVID protocols and observe what is outlined above about restricted access to campus spaces in phase 1.
- Resident seminarians have access to the regular campus spaces from which they were restricted in phase 1. They can also resume campus activities that were restricted in phase 1.