



# COVID-19 POLICY V7

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#### NOTE:

This documents for the guidance of all staff and visitors to Whittlebury Park It is under constant review and the latest version can be viewed on line at <u>www.whittlebury.com/covid-19</u>

It is based on a social distancing rule of 1 meter. If the Government publicly announces any change (including any variations to lockdown procedures) it will be immediately implemented.

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## Introduction

Recently, the Government has started to define the first cautious steps towards easing some of the restrictions of lockdown – including the anticipated re-opening of the hospitality sector, if the current situation continues to improve.

The purpose of this document is to set out an overview of Whittlebury Park's policies and processes in response to the evolving situation regarding Covid-19 and the anticipated easing of restrictions. This plan outlines the measures that are being taken to keep everybody safe, with a particular emphasis on how we will implement new ways of working as we cautiously reopen the business.

The document will be dynamic as it will need to evolve in line with the pandemic in order to ensure that it remains effective and relevant. When it comes to bringing our plan to life, and ensuring its success, this requires cooperation and effort from every single member of the team – as well as the guests we welcome to our facilities.

At Whittlebury Park, our number one priority is the health and safety of our team, our customers and our supply partners. You will recall the days and weeks prior to lockdown where we implemented strict new health, safety and cleaning protocols in a bid to play our part in reducing the transmission of coronavirus and to protect guests, team members and partners. We also set up a dedicated steering group within the business to ensure that we stayed ahead of developments and how they would affect us all here at Whittlebury.

Although we have all experienced the same pandemic over the last few months, our individual experiences during this time are very different and it's important that we always try to consider things from the perspectives of others and without judgement. This will become even more important as we look to re-start the business in what will undoubtedly be challenging circumstances.

Whilst the business has been closed to the public, and many of the team have been required to stay at home, those members of the team who have been working from home and onsite have been tireless in their efforts to ensure that Whittlebury Park is safeguarded and in the best possible position to re-open - safely - when permitted.

Whilst we have been closed we have

- Been working to keep the site safe and secure
- Defining new processes and sourcing the equipment that we will need in order to re-open safely
- Carrying out maintenance activity and building works to attack some of the jobs that are so incredibly hard to do when guests are with us
- Working with guests to ensure that we can still meet their requirements in the future
- Working with the Government and local authorities on an ongoing basis to ensure that our voice is heard both individually and as an industry

We have done everything possible to prepare our venues, facilities and outdoor spaces – with a skeleton team – to ensure that when we do re-open, it is in a manner that is as safe as possible.

For example, specific measures that you will notice may include signage, route markings to outline one-way systems, physical barriers, increased use of PPE, we also have a higher expectations from our guests, to ensure that it is a safe environment for everyone. WP - Working together Protecting everyone.

As well as pooling experience and know-how from within the business, we have also worked with our external Health & Safety consultants to ensure that we adopt best practices across the business.

As we begin the process of re-opening the Park, it will become quickly apparent that the way we do things will look and feel very different in the future. We all need to learn to adapt and work within our "new normal" – as we have within other aspects of our lives.

The things that come most naturally to us working in hospitality - welcoming our guests wholeheartedly and generously – will feel different when we re-open. Our actions will feel as though they are rather contrary to the usual intuitive human responses within our industry and I for one and find it particularly difficult not to shake hands with people.

It's vital to remember, however, that put simply, my health depends on your health - and your health depends on my health.

Social distancing is vital to ensure that the required space is allowed for maximum safety. We all need to ensure that personal hygiene is maintained rigorously and deep cleaning will become the daily norm – ensuring that surfaces and spaces are visibly clean as well as being free from invisible germs.

You can be confident that we will only re-open our facilities when we feel ready, and when we feel it is safe for our teams, customers and partners. We demonstrated this when it was announced that golf courses could re-open; despite significant pressure to open sooner, we only re-opened the course once we were comfortable that we had taken every measure possible to ensure safe practices.

We all hope so much to return to happier, more carefree times, but we cannot forget the suffering that has taken place – and continues to take place – and we must do all we can to protect each other as well as to continue to protect the people who have looked after our health, our wellbeing and our society through this time.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity once more to thank my core team who have continued to work alongside me through this intense and challenging period and I also thank those members of the team who have remained furloughed for their commitment to staying safe and their loyalty to Whittlebury Park.

Sincerely,

Charles Sargeant

**Managing Director** 

## Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19)

#### What is Covid-19

Covid-19 is a new infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and has spread quickly around the globe resulting in a pandemic. The virus is spread efficiently – believed to be more contagious than flu – and people can transmit the virus without showing any symptoms. The mortality rate is believed to be higher than for seasonal flu and outcomes are typically worse for people who have underlying health conditions, have a weakened immune system or are older. People within these groups have been contacted by the NHS and requested to "shield" as they are especially vulnerable to the virus. The Government has also included pregnant women within the higher risk category. There are multiple global trials in play to identify a vaccine but no vaccine has yet completed clinical trials.

#### What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms include a high temperature and fever, a new dry cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of smell and taste. There are more symptoms, but one of the above will always accompany them, so these are the key symptoms to look out for. While the majority of cases result in mild symptoms, some progress to acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) likely precipitated by a cytokine storm, multi-organ failure, septic shock, and blood clots. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days.

#### How is the disease spread?

The virus is primarily spread between people during close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing and talking. The droplets usually fall to the ground or onto surfaces rather than travelling through air over long distances. Less commonly, people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their face – in particular their nose, mouth or eyes. It is most contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread is possible before symptoms appear, and from people who do not show symptoms. People are most infectious when they show symptoms (even mild or non-specific symptoms), but may be infectious for up to two days before symptoms appear (pre-symptomatic transmission). The virus is believed to live outside the body on some surfaces for several hours.

#### What do we know about the virus on surfaces?

When contaminated droplets fall to floors or onto surfaces, they can remain infectious if people touch the contaminated surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

On surfaces, the amount of active virus decreases over time until it can no longer cause infection, however, it can be detected for up to four hours on copper, up to one day on cardboard, and up to three days on plastic and stainless steel.

Surfaces can be decontaminated with household disinfectants such as bleach, which kill the virus outside the human body.

## How are we trying to prevent the disease spreading?

Recommended preventive measures include:

- Frequent and thorough hand washing for more than 20 seconds
- Covering your mouth when coughing, or catching a sneeze in a tissue which is then disposed of safely
- Maintaining social distance from other people, at least 2 metres
- Wearing a face mask/visor in public settings where social distancing is not possible
- Wearing clean disposable gloves when handling cash, chemicals, food etc
- Monitoring and self-isolation for people who suspect they are infected.
- Governments and authorities worldwide have responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns, workplace hazard controls, and facility closures.
- Many places have also worked to increase testing capacity and trace contacts of infected persons.

### What has been the wider effect of the pandemic?

The pandemic has resulted in unprecedented social and economic disruption all around the globe, with many governments advising against non-essential travel and restricting the movements of people outside of their homes, including social contact.

We are experiencing the largest global recession since the Great Depression.

Healthcare facilities and those who work within them have been placed under extreme pressure and new emergency medical facilities were built at speed, in readiness for rapid deployment if required.

Major political, cultural, sporting and religious events have been postponed or cancelled and educational facilities and non-essential businesses have been closed.

Mass transportation, travel and the movement of individuals have been severely restricted or grounded completely and the worst affected industries have seen demand drop by 100% in a matter of hours. Fuel consumption dropped dramatically and oil prices collapsed into negative numbers as demand dried up. The emission of pollutants and greenhouse gases has, in turn, decreased.

Many countries have experienced pressure on supply chains for key household and food items, resulting in a wave of panic buying creating acute shortages on particular line items.

Misinformation has spread widely and rapidly.

### How has it affected the hospitality industry?

As an industry, in hospitality we have somewhat acted as a barometer for the rest of the economy – as we were the first to see the effect of the collapse in demand, the first to implement hard closures and will be among the last to fully re-open and return to required occupancy levels.

We know that much of our industry has been decimated, some of our competitors have ceased trading, and some of our colleagues no longer working with us. It is our duty to ensure that this is not in vain and that the hospitality industry bounces back better.

## When can we return to normal?

The spread of the disease is both emotionally and practically challenging for many people and has changed our day-to-day lives in unprecedented ways.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) advise that "all sections of society – including employers and employees – should play a role to protect themselves and each other and help prevent further spread of the disease."

Although the scientific community is making new discoveries every day, there is an enormous amount that we do not yet understand about the way that the virus behaves and how it might be treated.

The level of uncertainty that we are all dealing with is extremely challenging. Uncertainty creates concern in any business or organisation, as is always reflected in the stock markets and as we have experienced through Brexit, but there is particular concern that we simply do not know how long we may have to live with COVID-19 for, or how the disease may progress in the future.

The combined effect of uncertainty with fear, sometimes fuelled by media reporting styles and an over-consumption of news, creates much anxiety. For this reason, it is particularly important to protect mental health and check in on fact-based news once or twice a day – and not to become absorbed in biased reporting or fake news.

The Government has set out a roadmap to start to return to more normal activity, for as many people as possible, as quickly and fairly as is practical, with the aim of safeguarding livelihoods whilst also continuing to protect the NHS and mitigate against the spread of the disease.

### Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide due diligence and to establish the measures necessary to ensure that employees, guests, contractors and suppliers are protected when working at Whittlebury Park or using venues and facilities across the estate.

In accordance with current UK government advice, we are committed to reducing the risk of exposure to Covid-19 for our team members, members of the public and supply partners, as far as is reasonable and practical.

Additional guidance documents which should be used in conjunction with this policy document. <u>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19</u>

The Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England publish their guidance to www.gov.uk/coronavirus. This information and links to other relevant GOV.UK guidance are the primary source of information upon which this policy and guidance documents are based.

For the purpose of compliance with health and safety law, the content of this document is designed to meet the functional requirements of the following legislation:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.

- The Workplace (health, safety and welfare) Regulations 1992.

## Implementation

This policy and guidance documents, along with all revisions, will be issued by the Senior Management Team to Heads of Department, and the relevant information must be cascaded down to all team members.

Each Head of Department is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves and their team with this policy and raising queries concerning the policy in a timely manner to their Line Manager in the first instance.
- Implementing this policy and operating measures within their remit
- Maintaining the required standards as defined within this policy at all times
- Carry out regular and routine mandatory checks including the enforcement of regular handwashing, the provision of sanitiser and the efficacy of cleaning schedules
- Use the newly rolled out temperature checking systems in place to ensure that there department temperature check themselves on a daily basis.
- Provide return to work advice to their teams including advice regarding travel, in line with the latest government recommendations and in line with the guidance provided at <a href="http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a>
- Provide peer support across departments as well as to Line Managers by providing feedback on the operational aspects of the policy, suggesting improvements or amendments as appropriate to ensure that the finer details remain effective and relevant via our daily 10.15 and 16.15 meetings, COVID specific actions will be recorded by the most senior manager and sent to PA to Managing Director to ensure Board of Management visibility.

### Monitoring

The Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England website will be monitored daily by our Health & Safety Team

When changes are introduced that may affect this policy or our operating processes, they will be communicated by Planday (our internal timekeeping software), which has a "force read" function, to all team members. It will also be displayed on staff notice boards, and screens around the property if the information is required by the public.

Heads of Department will take part in a conference call weekly, or more frequently as necessary, organised by PA to the MD. The purpose of the call is to keep this policy and guidance up to date by reviewing any changes to the primary source of information and operational feedback. These meetings will continue until the process is no longer requiring refinement, or the pandemic is over.

### Review

To ensure the ongoing efficacy and relevance of this policy it is vital to conduct regular reviews.

When changes are introduced that affect this policy and our operating processes, the revised documentation will be sent to Heads of Departments by the PA to the MD, and mentioned in our daily 10:15/16:15 meetings. The latest version of this document will be stored on the managers HR file, to which everyone has a link on their computer desktop.

# Safe Working Practices

All existing Standard Operating Procedures have been reviewed in line with government guidance and our consultants.

- Staff temperature checked on arrival at work
- Guests are encouraged to embrace and use one of our temperature checking stations, using the latest contactless technology on arrival at the property.
- Automated GDPR compliant temperature checks in commonly used public and staff areas.
- Increased guidance for guests and staff through the use of signage.
- Our working practices have been updated in significant detail. A top line summary of this is:
- Robust COVID-19 staff training
- Comprehensive cleaning and disinfecting regimes
- The provision to all staff of effective 2 way PPE
- Reduced guest contact
  - We encourage contactless payment where possible, and have lifted restrictions with apple pay, google pay and android pay.
  - We encourage pre arrival check-in, and express check out facilities, to minimalize guest time at Reception.

### **Return to Work Inductions & Training**

All team members will be required to complete a return to work with COVID specific Training course and induction using our online learning platform "Enterprise E-Learning" prior to returning to work.

Once returned to work – but prior to completing any activities – each team member will be required to complete a departmental training program which will cover the processes for safe working practices within the department.

This training will cover specific processes for each department and as a minimum the following will be covered:

- Covid-19 awareness
- The correct procedure for effective hand washing
- Social distancing measures
- The importance of personal hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfecting your work area
- Employee awareness

### **Posters & Signage**

As a venue, we are in a strong position to educate both our employees and visitors to site. As such, posters and signage will play a vital role in supporting the safe return to work and re-opening of the business.

Some of the new signage visible around the property will include:

"One way signage or divided thoroughfares "

"If you have any of these symptoms please do not enter the property"

"Please maintain social distancing at all time"

"Please sanitise your hands"

"Do not use (social distancing)"

"Maintain 2m social distancing"

"Wash your hands for 20 seconds"

"Catch it – Kill it – Bin it"

"Only one person at a time to use the elevator"

"For everyone's safety please use this station"

#### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- The best defence against COVID-19 is personal hygiene and maintaining social distancing.
- PPE is not a substitute for effective social distancing or good hygiene.
- PPE will be available for all team members who wish to wear it.
- For some roles PPE will be mandatory (where social distancing is not possible and food preparation).

After looking at all the available options it has been decided that face shields are better due to their two-way protection, comfort and better aesthetic qualities. If however staff still wish to use face masks in addition to shields, these will be provided.

Personal Protective Equipment will be provided to team members where appropriate and will be detailed in each of the departmental SOPs.

The decision to wear PPE will be a joint decision taken by the employer and the employee. Training on the appropriate and effective use of the PPE, including the safe application, removal and disposal of the PPE will be given at the return to work induction.

Each Department will be provided with a station to sanitise their hands regularly.

Maximum and minimum stock levels will be put in place, with ordering responsibility given to a dedicated person.

#### Social Distancing – Front of House

Guests will be required to practice social distancing by standing a minimum of 2 metres away from other people not travelling with them while standing at reception, in the bar, in queues, waiting for elevators or moving around the estate.

Guests will receive a link in the booking confirmation that will direct them to our specific COVID-19 web page which will detail our new visitor code of conduct.

Restaurant tables, lounge areas, bar areas and other physical layouts will be arranged to ensure appropriate distancing and balance capacity.

For small elevators – only one person at a time will be permitted to use the elevators (call buttons and panels inside the elevators will be to be frequently cleaned and disinfected).

## Social Distancing – Back of House

Wherever possible, some team members will continue to work from home.

All team members will be trained to practice social distancing by working at least 2 metres away from others wherever possible – where not possible side by side or back to back working will take place.

We will conduct as many team meetings as possible online. Where a physical meeting is required this will take place in a space that enables us to practice safe social distancing (where possible outside).

### **Staff Refreshments**

Due to the current regulations around social distancing and the use of buffet self-service, employees will now be required to bring their own food to work.

Additional space for team members to take their breaks will be introduced and team members will be encouraged to eat in outside areas or to take their food back to their desks.

In order to reduce risk across Departments, it is recommended that staff do not use break rooms at the same time as colleagues from other Departments.

#### Hand Sanitiser Stations

Hand sanitiser stations will be placed at all staff and guest entrances and all areas where guests or team members are required to be present in any volume. There will be prompts to remind guests and team members to sanitise their hands whenever they enter a building, and at regular intervals whist at work or during their stay and when they leave the building.

Staff will be required to wash their hands frequently using hot water and soap at the wash hand basins for at least 20 seconds each time (sing Happy Birthday song twice) and to dry their hands with clean disposable paper towels.

#### **Public Spaces and Communal Areas**

Housekeeping responsibility has been extended to all teams. Departments have now been given additional responsibility to clean their own areas. All high contact surfaces (such as door handles, reception desk, taps, hand rails) are regularly cleaned and disinfected between housekeeping visits.

One way systems have been introduced in high traffic areas to assist will social distancing measures.

Non-Fire / Security doors will be wedged / held open

#### Bedrooms

Housekeeping will be available on request only, guests to vacate room and ventilate prior to housekeeping staff entering. If a guest wishes for their room to be serviced, they must inform reception the night before they expect their service.

Additional guest amenities such as towels or bathroom products can be provided on request.

Room service will be provided at no extra cost, service is restricted to delivery to the bedroom door

Rooms will be sealed by housekeeping once cleaned, to give our guests confidence that no one has entered the room since.

A one way system throughout the hotel will be implemented where possible

Enhanced cleaning programme in public areas with an increased frequency in disinfection of high touch areas

Additional disinfection will be in place of high touch room and bathroom areas (Door knobs, TV Remote, Crave units)

Unnecessary items will be removed to limit the number of items that need to be cleaned or discarded.

Laundry and waste will not be moved from one room to the next. Laundry and waste will be bagged immediately to avoid spreading the virus. Laundry will not be left unpacked anywhere. This will be the same process with guests rubbish in bedrooms.

Team members - such as Maintenance and Housekeeping - will not enter the bedroom while guests are in the room. In case of a maintenance emergency, where staff must enter a bedroom with a guest in it, staff will enter wearing PPE (face shield, mask and gloves).

### Reception

Our aim is to reduce the need for guests to go to reception as much as possible through the use of technology. We will be encouraging guests to check-in online in advance of arrival.

When guests do need to use reception, social distancing measures will be introduced by implementing a queuing system with parties required to queue 2 metres apart from those not travelling together.

This will be enforced with both wall and floor signage.

Screen guards will be present at all reception areas.

Hand sanitising stations will be introduced to all reception areas.

All one way systems will start and finish at reception.

### Food & Beverage

The highest food safety standards will continue to be maintained

Social distancing measures will be introduced, and protective screen guards will be placed on all bars.

Tables and seating will be arranged accordingly, and capacities will be introduced to limit the number of people in any space.

In the short to medium term we are trying to minimise the requirement for guests to have to interact with staff. W

We will be encouraging all guests to order food and drink via our new App. Our new App will tell back of house teams where you are when you've ordered your food, so that we know where to deliver it to. It will also take payment at that time therefore reducing the requirement once more for you to go to a Pay point.

Food and beverage service teams will then be split in two. We will have a delivery team, and a clearing team. The delivery team will always be 'clean' and the clearing team will be 'dirty', this will ensure that there is no cross contamination between tables. These teams will be clearly identifiable through the colour of their PPE.

Room service will be delivered to the bedroom door, the team member will leave the tray on a stand outside the door and will knock clearly announcing themselves and stepping back to a minimum distance of 2 metres from the door and wait for it to be collected.

All members of our food and beverage team that are required to serve customers will be wearing face protection.

#### **Conference & Events**

We have reduced all of our room capacities to 40%, this will ensure that social distancing can be maintained at all times.

A one-way system may be introduced around our corridors, to ensure social distancing

All conference rooms will be sanitised at the end of every day, and whenever people vacate for breaks etc.

We recommend that at the start of the day, delegates choose where they are going to sit in a conference room, and keep that seat for the rest of the day.

Public coffee stations will no longer be in use, refreshments will be delivered to the conference room.

Pens, paper flipcharts have also been removed from the training rooms, and will be available on request. This is to ensure that the best hygiene measures can be adhered to.

The use of wireless technology has been rolled out throughout all of our rooms. There is no longer the need for cables to use our big screens, projectors, and AV equipment.

Several rooms have been "video conferencing" enabled.

Hand gel stations and appropriate signage will be provided to each conference room.

#### Cleaning

All public hand and food contact areas (such as coffee stations) will be cleaned and disinfected at the start of each day, frequently during the day and at the end of each day.

Food equipment / machinery will have to be disconnected (electrically isolated) first, wipes down with disinfectant wipes and only turned back on when dry / safe to do so.

# Golf

A course code of conduct has been produced and a link to this code of conduct is sent to players prior to arrival.

Code of conduct can be found in Appendix A

In addition to the playing code of conduct, other measures have been introduced such as:

- Hand sanitiser provided in public areas
- Social distancing measures and one-way signage in place on the course
- 10 minutes intervals between tee times
- All touch points removed from the golf course e.g. flags bunker rakes benches ball washers air blowers
- Golf buggies are available, but there is a strict sanitisation process, with signage to show when buggies have been sanitised after each use.
- Driving range will remain closed until further notice, use of practice greens are restricted to 2 people.
- A "one in one out" policy has been introduced in the pro shop

### **Contactless Experience**

We are mindful that for both staff and guests, a contactless experience is currently preferable. We have therefore updated all venues and outlets are now contactless enabled, and payment limits have been removed for Apple pay, Google pay and Android pay.

### Cashless

Our top priority is always the safety of staff and guests. In order to minimise the potential for transmission we are endeavouring to reduce the amount of cash processed. We have a number of contactless options available including contactless card, Apple Pay and Android Pay as well as an app through which some orders can be placed. We hope that you will work with us to move towards a contactless, and safer, future.

### Spa & Leisure Club

Both the spa and Leisure club will be operating with significantly reduced numbers.

Guest will be encouraged to use our automated – touch free temperature checking stations on arrival - for staff this is a requirement.

The gym, indoor and outdoor pools and changing rooms will be operating with significantly reduced numbers and will be disinfected on a regular basis.

Class sizes will be reduced

Work out mats will be removed

Hand sanitising stations will be in place in entrance of all areas in the spa and health club

Gym equipment will be disinfected between each guest's use; either by the guest or by health club attendant. A validation method will be in place

Arrival times staggered and space between packages will allow a deeper clean of more public areas.

You will be given your robe, towel and slippers in a sealed in a bag when you check into the spa

In spa treatment rooms, all surfaces and fixtures will be disinfected between each client. With an enhanced cleaning process. Room "turn around" times have been increased from 5 minutes to 30 minutes.

Treatment rooms will be allocated per therapist and electrostatic sanitisation of all common areas and treatment rooms will take place daily

All tools and equipment will be sanitised after each client (e.g. combs, brushes, hairpins, rollers)

We will only offer bottled water

Lounge furniture inside the spa will be spaced out appropriately, removed or closed off to ensure social distancing, although allowing guests who came together to still sit together.

We will remove all reading material

Pool and thermal rooms when reopened will have clear guidance on guest occupancy to aid social distancing and we will follow all government guidance on hygiene standards whilst in operation.

Signage and a procedures will be in place to ensure social distancing is followed

### END OF DOCUMENT