

Advice on new COVID rules to SCCA clubs

Dear SCCA Club Officials,

Following the government's decision to move to "Plan B", as announced on 8th December 2021, the SCCA has updated its county match guidelines. The most material legislative change for chess clubs, which became effective on 10th December 2021, is that government has now made it a legal requirement for face masks to be worn in the majority of indoor settings. [Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). SCCA has evaluated its home county match venue of Cheam Parochial Rooms as included in the legal requirement to wear face masks. This evaluation is consistent with the views of the administrators at Cheam.

Chess clubs need to make their own assessments of their venues. Clubs, committees and their members are legally responsible for their home venues and their conduct at all playing venues.

To assist SCCA chess clubs the SCCA Board would like to offer the following advice:

- Club venues will generally be considered to be within one or more of the following categories under the new Regulations: community centres (including village halls), members' clubs or social clubs, all of which categories now legally require face masks to be worn indoors, except where an individual is exempt.
- Some chess clubs meet at hospitality venues (mainly pubs). While these venues appear to enjoy a legal exemption, it is not clear if this exemption would only apply to events at which the main activities include eating and drinking. In a chess match eating and drinking are not the main activities.
- In our view, the policy intention of the new legislation is to cover meetings between people who do not ordinarily meet each other indoors in order to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant and that should apply equally to chess matches at any venue.

SCCA recommendation is, therefore, that you should proceed on the basis that you adopt compulsory face mask wearing (except where an individual is exempt) at your home venue with immediate effect.

Please ensure that the SCCA webmaster is informed of the result of your club's assessment so that the information can be posted on SCCA website for the information of all clubs.

Below is the updated advice which SCCA has produced for its county matches, including the new face mask requirement. We hope it is of assistance to SCCA chess clubs as they address the recent changes.

- Keep in touch with government guidelines and mandates [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The following is based on the current version as at the date below
- Avoid bringing the virus to matches or meetings by:
 - Not attending if you have tested positive for COVID (this is a legal requirement)
 - Not attending if you have any COVID symptoms or if you don't feel well
 - Getting fully vaccinated
 - Taking a lateral flow test prior to the event [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Mitigating airborne transmission by:
 - **WEARING A FACE MASK UNLESS YOU ARE MEDICALLY EXEMPT FROM DOING SO**
 - **MASKS CAN BE REMOVED FOR A LIMITED TIME SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF DRINKING OR EATING, THEY SHOULD BE WORN AT ALL OTHER TIMES**
 - Ventilating venues as far as is practicable

- Spacing out boards/seating as far as is practicable
 - Avoiding congregating around boards
- Mitigating touch transmission by:
 - Using hand sanitizer
 - Avoiding common touch points such as refreshment areas where possible

SCCA Board 12th December 2021