

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation
COVID Safety Protocols
October 7, 2021

Dear Shaarei Shomayim Membership,

Our Medical Committee and Board have reviewed our health and safety protocols to ensure that the needs of all of our members are met. We have taken into account the non-vaccinated status of our children and the real safety concerns presented by COVID. The following guidelines reflect the advice we have received from the Medical Committee and the best possible way of ensuring both the accessibility of the shul to the entire community and the health and safety of all of our members. Please review the updated policies which are effective as of today.

1. **Vaccine Requirements:** Everyone 12 and over entering our building is required to be fully vaccinated. On Shabbat, there will be an initial verbal screening by our security guards at the entrance to the shul and unvaccinated adults will not be permitted to enter the building.
2. **Masks:** In accordance with Toronto Public Health Guidelines, everyone from the ages of 2 and over are required to wear a mask inside the building. We know that this may be difficult for younger children, but trust and appreciate that parents will do everything they can to ensure the safety of everyone.
3. **Minyanim:** We will continue to offer a range of minyanim to our members. Please review the rules for the minyan that you and your family members attend.
 - **Full Vaccine-only Minyan:** The shul will continue to maintain a Shabbat morning minyan exclusively for those that are fully vaccinated. Commencing this Shabbat, the Hashkama Minyan in the Sisterhood Hall has been designated for this purpose. Social distancing and masks are required.
 - **Tent Minyan:** Our tent minyan will continue for as long as the weather allows. We are currently planning to retain at least one tent until the end of November. Fully vaccinated adults davening in the tents are exempt from wearing a mask outdoors. Unvaccinated adults and children 2+ must wear a mask at all times. We ask that parents help in ensuring that children are wearing their masks properly and that their mouth, nose and chin are fully covered. Social distance should continue to be maintained at all times.
 - **Family Friendly Minyan:** The Sharp Sanctuary minyan has been designated as family friendly and is open to unvaccinated children under 12 who are seated with their parents. Everyone is required to wear a mask in this minyan, except for children under 2. Again, we ask that parents help to ensure that masks are being worn properly by their children and greatly appreciate their co-operation in doing so. Social distance must be maintained and families are required to maintain a distance of two metres (six feet) from non-family members. This is consistent with the current spacing of seats in the Sharp Sanctuary. This applies to all minyanim that take place in the Sharp Sanctuary including weekdays, Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat Mincha.
 - **Indoor Teen Minyan:** Teens attending the teen minyan must be fully vaccinated, stay socially distanced and wear masks at all times.
4. **Children's Programs and Groups:** Children's programs (including snacks) will continue to take place outdoors and be socially distanced as long as possible in the tents and pergolas in the parking lots. Children are asked to wear masks when approaching youth leaders, and wear masks indoors. Plans are currently underway for indoor programs and will be announced when confirmed. The Netivot area has been designated for children's programming as well.
5. **Bathrooms:** The lower level bathrooms in the Netivot wing have been designated as 'family friendly' and are open to children and adults. The bathrooms adjacent to the Sisterhood Hall will be designated for use by adults only. The bathrooms on the main floor have been designated as 'family friendly' and are open to children and adults.
6. **Kiddushim:** For the time being, Kiddush will continue to take place outdoors only after davening for the entire congregation in one of the tents. Social distance should be maintained as is reasonably possible. The Medical Committee is currently exploring ways to safely offer indoor Kiddush to members. Once plans are made they will be communicated to our membership.
7. **General:** Those who are experiencing symptoms or have knowingly been exposed to COVID should not attend shul under any circumstances.

Although things look more hopeful, we continue to face unprecedented constraints. In spite of this, we are developing creative solutions to ensure that we can continue to provide safe and enjoyable minyanim and programs to all of our members. We are exploring additional space options both indoors and outdoors as well as heating options for our tents as the weather turns colder. In the face of these challenges, we continue to welcome growing numbers of new and longstanding members and their parents, relatives and friends. We all have a responsibility to help out and keep each other safe, if you see someone who is not complying with our protocol, a friendly reminder would be helpful and appreciated.

I would like to particularly welcome back into the Sharp Sanctuary our children! We appreciate the challenges that families have faced throughout the course of the pandemic and believe that the plans we have put into place will encourage everyone to come back to shul safely and comfortably. We have successfully (BH) kept everyone safe and healthy to date and we will continue to make every effort to do so and create a warm and welcoming environment.

Thank you for your patience and your support as we continue to navigate these waters.

We can't wait to see you in shul.

Robin Gofine
President