



In response to the Covid-19 Delta variant, and our value of pikuach nefesh (preserving human life), we have made some changes to our Covid Safety Protocols.

Most importantly, beginning Monday, August 30, 2021 all people over the age of 12 will be required to show proof of vaccination in order to attend all indoors, in-person Temple Beth Am services, events and activities. Please see the details below.

In accordance with recent Washington State mandates, **masks will be required at all times while indoors at Beth Am, including while on the Bima.** We recognize that it can be difficult to hear the clergy and participants from the bima, so we are looking to improve YouTube's closed captioning limitations. We are also fine-tuning the individual clergy microphones to enhance the sound.

Lastly, we will limit our indoor service capacity to 25% occupancy. However by using the Social Hall for overflow seating, we can still safely accommodate close to 175 congregants for most services. We are also in the process of expanding our capability to offer in-person outdoor programs and services.

These new Beth Am Covid Safety Guidelines have been implemented based on the rise of COVID-19 cases in King County, feedback from our community, in consultation with the Board and Health Task Force, the direction other organizations in King County are moving, as well as alignment to our Jewish value of pikuach nefesh – aiming to save a Jewish life. We want to do all that can so that when you are at Beth Am you know you are in the lowest risk environment possible at the moment can feel as safe as possible t, so you and those around you can while you connect to Judaism and each other.

How will these changes impact the Gan (our Youth Learning Program)?

The Gan does not begin to meet until October 3rd. Based on the status of COVID-19 now, we still intend to offer the Gan in-person. We will also offer virtual learning options for families that prefer that (whether for safety, convenience, or any other reason).

To keep our community safe, we are planning the following. Every staff member, madrich (assistant teacher) and students over 12 years of age must be fully vaccinated in order to participate in-person.

For students under 12 years old who are currently unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we are doing the following:

Creating grade-level learning pods of 6 or fewer students (and where possible connecting these by family relationships) to limit contact with other unvaccinated children from week to week;
using the best health and safety practices and guidelines such as masks and social distancing;
adding tents to our courtyard to enable year-round outdoor learning.

We will not require testing for the Gan.

Our goal is to create an in-person experience where risk is mitigated while students have the opportunity to enjoy learning and being together without having to Covid test each week. We will provide updated Gan COVID-19 plans and information on our website as we get closer to the start date for 5782.

Will I have to show my proof of vaccination each time I attend services or an in-person event?

Yes. This is a new area of law and technology, and our electronic record storage system is not HIPAA

compliant. We ask for your patience as we work out a health record data system. We appreciate your understanding as we adapt to these ever-changing circumstances. For proof of vaccination we will recognize vaccination cards, photos/photocopies of vaccination cards, health records, or a digital version of your card safely stored on your smartphone.

What happens if I forget to bring proof of vaccination or my negative PCR test (for children under 12) with me to an in-person event?

Unfortunately, for the safety of our community, we cannot allow anyone without proof of vaccination or testing to attend in-person events. Again, we hope to quickly find a solution to storing vaccination information for our members and we will update you as soon as we find a solution.

How is Beth Am defining “vaccinated”? Does this definition include boosters for those that received their first vaccine more than eight months ago and what COVID-19 tests are accepted?

At this time, we are defining vaccinated as any person who has received their second shot (or first in the case of Johnson & Johnson) of a COVID-19 vaccine. When and if booster shots are widely available and recommended by our Health Task Force, we will reevaluate our definition. For children under 12 years of age, PCR tests must be taken within 72 hours of entry and any rapid antigen test must be taken within 24 hours of entry.

Are masks required outside at Temple Beth Am?

Yes. Masks must be worn at all times any in-person Beth Am activity except when seated eating and/or drinking outside. We ask that you put your mask back on after you are done eating and/or drinking. This will allow you to both enjoy spending time with others and minimize the risks of spreading Covid.

Is this the final set of COVID-19-related changes?

We anticipate that Beth Am Covid Safety Guidelines may continue to change as cases rise, fall, boosters become available and vaccines become available for children. We will review these guidelines on an ongoing basis and keep you all up to date. Visit our website for updates.

As much as this pandemic can feel overwhelming, we will continue to find ways to bring our members together. We appreciate your continued commitment to making Beth Am a place where all people—including vulnerable populations—feel safe as well as stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We are proud to partner with each of you as we live our Jewish values and create a safe place to connect in person with others in this difficult time. With many blessings in 5782!