

## Community Letter from the Orthodox Rabbis of Southern Westchester

Dear friends,

We write to you in unprecedented times that have brought great upheaval to the world around us, to our region and has hit the heart of our Jewish community, in a very real way. In fact, no community has, arguably, been impacted more (and, God willing, no one else will in the future) than our greater Westchester community. There are many people that have not only tested positive to COVID-19 in our collective communities, but there also several who are currently hospitalized in area hospitals and are in serious condition.

Therefore, due to the unknown and dangerous nature of this highly communicable disease, with the awareness that our hospitals are already filled with COVID-19 patients, and acknowledging that this is an ever-changing reality, we, the Orthodox Rabbis of Southern Westchester, have come together - for the protection and safety of our community so that it not spread further - and decided to adopt directives similar to those wisely adopted by the Rabbinical Council of Bergen County. These are our adapted directives that are in effect immediately and will remain in place, indefinitely, until further notice:

1. All community members are strongly encouraged to work from home, if possible, and to stay home whenever possible. It is critical for adults to set the right example.
2. As most schools are currently closed and many are in quarantine, we strongly discourage children having playdates with different families, even if they are not under quarantine. It also goes without saying, that it is against the law, against Halacha and a tremendous Chillul Hashem to allow children under quarantine to have playdates with other children, in their homes or at other homes.
3. Shuls will be closed for all minyanim and shiurim effective immediately until further notice. There should be no house minyanim. All of the rabbis will be davening alone in their own homes. Please daven at home, individually.
4. There should be no public celebrations for Semachot.
5. People should not have gatherings for Shabbat meals.
6. Shiva visits should be replaced by phone/video calls.
7. Funerals should be restricted to a small group of family members and a minyan.
8. Refrain from contact sports.
9. Restaurants should not seat customers. People should order for pick-up and delivery only. Please consider ordering from local Westchester eateries, as they depend on our business, especially at a difficult financial time for them like this one.
10. The Mikvaot will remain open, by appointment only (YIS is open; YINR TBD), at the guidance of the CDC and local health authorities. Both Mikvaot have been cleaned and sanitized appropriately. Women under quarantine or who are experiencing symptoms of illness, or have a family member who's tested positive for COVID-19, may not use the mikvah at this time. Please consult your Rav for further clarification or for specific questions.

We urge you to adhere to these directives until further notice. Of course, at this time, we should continue davening, learning and performing Mitzvot as much as we can - even if it is at home. And, with these merits, may Hashem send a Refuah Sheleimah to all of the Cholim of our County, our Country, in Israel and across the world.

Respectfully,

The Orthodox Rabbis of Southern Westchester:

Rabbi Yaakov Bienenfeld, Young Israel of Harrison  
Rabbi Reuven Fink, Young Israel of New Rochelle  
Rabbi Craig Glasser, Northeast Jewish Center  
Rabbi Shmuel Greenberg, Young Israel of White Plains  
Rabbi Evan Hoffman, Congregation Anshe Sholom  
Rabbi Chaim Marder, Hebrew Institute of White Plains  
Rabbi Jonathan Morgenstern, Young Israel of Scarsdale  
Rabbi Daniel Rosenfelt, Fleetwood Synagogue  
Rabbi Mitchell Serels, Magen David Sephardic Congregation