



OHR KODESH CONGREGATION

Dear Congregants,

June 24, 2021

As OKC and the wider community continue to lift COVID-related restrictions we felt it important to inform you about the results of our recent vaccination survey and some of the steps we are taking in response.

All 243 survey respondents reported that they are fully vaccinated and that the majority of unvaccinated people in households are children that are under the age of 12, and therefore not yet eligible to receive the vaccine. As of June 16, 2021, 65% of all Montgomery County residents were vaccinated, with 91% of individuals age 65 and older vaccinated and 79% of those over 18 vaccinated. Our survey results suggest that the OKC community is vaccinated at least to the same extent as Montgomery County overall.

If you have not already done so, we highly encourage you to get vaccinated. **Everyone** 12 years of age and older is currently eligible and appointments are readily available.

In terms of coming back to the synagogue, 87% of respondents feel comfortable returning with masks for all and social distancing in place. Seventy-three percent (73%) of respondents feel comfortable with vaccinated individuals unmasked with social distancing in place, and 43% of respondents feel comfortable if vaccinated individuals are unmasked and there is no social distancing.

The Board and clergy have reviewed these results and recognize that each of us has experienced the events of the last 17 months through our particular lenses, and therefore was impacted in different ways. As the pandemic restrictions ease and opportunities for in-person worship, gatherings, and events become possible, it is not surprising that our respective comfort levels vary. Some of us are more comfortable proceeding slowly and cautiously while others are eager to attend in-person activities to the fullest extent possible, in accordance with local and national health guidelines - without masks or social distancing. As a congregation, we are trying to balance all these needs and perspectives. It is important, as a community, that we respond to these differences with mutual respect, tolerance, compassion, and acceptance.

Below are the **updated** Ohr Kodesh COVID-related Protocols. The masking and distancing policies are more restrictive than the requirements of the CDC, State and Montgomery County and the Ohr Kodesh Health Committee; however, they are based on the results of the congregational survey and reflect the comfort level of the majority of our congregants.

We hope that with the Montgomery County case rate at low levels and the vaccination rate continuing to increase to high levels, two variables that are critical to easing restrictions, congregants will gain more comfort to return to their pre-pandemic activities in the manner they had performed them previously. We are prepared to further relax restrictions to be



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consistent with the CDC and state and local guidance. **These protocols will be monitored frequently and are subject to change to respond to the rapidly changing environment.**

Your safety and comfort in our *kehilla* (community) are of the utmost importance to the OKC clergy, Board of Directors, and staff.

As always, please feel free to contact me with your comments and questions.

Rise Ain

President, Ohr Kodesh Congregation

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OHR KODESH CONGREGATION COVID-19 PROTOCOLS, as of JUNE 24, 2021

Outdoor Activities (e.g., Outdoor Minyan, outdoor concerts, etc.):

- There will be no limits on the number of people who can attend.
- No check-in or temperature checks.
- Masking is optional, but strongly encouraged when children under the age of 12 are in attendance.
- Hand sanitizer and disposable masks will be available, as needed.

Indoor Activities (including events like the Main Sanctuary Shabbat morning services):

- The capacity in the Main Sanctuary will be 275 people.
- No check-in or temperature checks.
- Children and adults are able to freely move in and out of the Sanctuary and use the lobby space.
- Masks are required for everyone 2 years old and over.
- Each household should sit in a socially distanced manner (There will be signage to assist as people enter the Sanctuary).
- We will conduct services as normal, except for modified *Torah Hakafot* (taking the *Torah* around the Sanctuary).

Shabbat Morning Kids' Group Programming:

- Kids from either the Indoor Service or Outdoor Service can attend together.
- There will be no maximum size of groups.
- Advanced **sign up is mandatory** for attendance.
- Activities will be held in the Social Hall.
- Groups will be led by individuals who are vaccinated.
- Everyone present must be masked.

Kiddush:

- Will be held outdoors and combined for the Indoor and Outdoor Services.
- Masks are strongly encouraged, except when eating or drinking.