

April 29, 2021

Subject: YIPC COVID-19 Guidelines Update

Dear YIPC,

We have tremendous gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that the vaccines have introduced opportunities to safely evolve in our COVID-19 precautions. We are deeply proud of how our Kehila has navigated the challenges of safely gathering for Tefilah and Torah learning during the pandemic.

We would also like to express our HaKoras HaTov to Rabbi Glasser for his leadership, guidance, and continued support throughout this pandemic.

On Wednesday night April 28th, Rabbi Glasser addressed the shul over Zoom and explained our approach to easing of certain COVID-19 related safety restrictions and provided words of chizuk. If you were not able to join, you can hear a recording by following this [link](#).

Below is a summary of the key changes to our COVID related policies:

Seating in Shul [Beginning Friday Night, May 7th]

- Our goal over the upcoming weeks is to provide vaccinated members the opportunity to safely sit in shul without the requirement of social distancing.
- At this time, we are maintaining our mask requirement, and will continue to re-evaluate when it is recommended to provide the choice to remove them.
- For those who wish to remain seated in a socially distanced fashion (either because you are not yet vaccinated, not yet comfortable sitting without social distancing, and/or you have children with you in Shul and prefer not to have them sit in the vaccinated section), we have created a form in which we request everyone to convey their needs to those working on the seating. Please click the following [link](#) and submit the form no later than Sunday evening, May 2. Note: We will be setting up our socially distanced sections (in the both the Men and Women's sections) based upon your feedback. **Please help us by submitting the form on time.**
- For those who will request socially distanced seating, please note that under advisement related to a shift in CDC recommendations, we are moving the social distancing span from 6ft to 3ft.
- At this time, we are maintaining the policy that there are still no "Makom Kavuah" seats in the Shul. Anyone may sit in any seat in their preferred section, based upon first come-first served without regard to previous seating. Upon returning the Shul to entirely normal functioning, we will reintroduce our original seating in the shul.

Minyan Registration [Beginning Friday Night, May 7th]

- Registration for all Minyanim except Shabbos morning will end. We anticipate enough planning to ensure that options are available for everyone. If there is not sufficient space in a particular Minyan, the Gabbaim present will open an additional Minyan.

- Registration for Shabbos will be lifted after we can determine that there is enough space to accommodate everyone who we presume is interested in the 8:45 AM Minyan, thus alleviating any need to continue taking registration.

- On Shabbos morning:

- We will continue to have a 7AM Hashkama Minyan.
- Our goal is to reunite the 8:45 AM and 9:15 AM Minyanim into one Minyan (time to be determined shortly).
- Once we can determine that there is enough space to accommodate everyone into a single Minyan, we will retire the 9:15 AM Minyan, and eliminate the need for registration.

Tefilah

- Pesicha will now return to its status as an independent Kibbud, which can be given out, and the Sefer Torah may be handed to the Baal Shachris, who will then bring it to the Bimah.

- Hagbah and Gelilah may be given to any two individuals from different households that are both vaccinated.

- We are removing the limitations on singing

- Olim that receive an aliya are still asked to step down from the Bimah, but should stand next to the bimah and not return to their seat, until the conclusion of the next Aliyah

- The location of the Baalei Tefilah will return to Pre-Covid Minhagim of YIPC

- Aliyos will continue to be conducted with the divider for now.

Shiurim

- Shiurim open to the general public will continue to require masks, and the same social distancing expectations of the Tefilos (vaccinated people and those mixing households may choose to sit together).

- Shiurim that are attended by a specifically designated group (Daf HaShavuah and Semichas Chaver) will move into the Beis Midrash and will now accommodate those who wish to drink coffee, as well as food at the Daf HaShavuah Shiur. Masks are required except when eating and drinking.

- The Beis Midrash is open for use. Please be sensitive to others and inquire regarding their comfort level before sitting within 3 ft. of another individual.

Youth

- Teens: We are aiming to resume the teen Minyan during the summer.

- Preschool-6th grade: As the youth population is unvaccinated and we lack outdoor facilities, there remain some constraints in safely returning the youth groups to Shul. We are sensitive to the pods that have been established by the local schools, and once the academic year has concluded and kids are mixing more generally, we will approach the

reopening of groups. We are working with our youth director to begin the process of structuring how the youth groups can run, especially once we have use of the social hall, and will share that progress and anticipated plans as soon as they are ready. Returning the youth groups safely to the Shul remains one of our highest priorities.

Rentals

- At this time, the only events we are considering hosting are Brisim, Sheva Brachos, Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs that involve formal seating, and select programming. Each Simcha will have to provide a COVID-19 plan that ensures appropriate precautions are being taken.
- Reservations of the Shul space will first be made available to Shul members (for upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, Sheva Brachos, etc. for the coming year), for a period of ten days, and then opened to the general community. Rentals for more “open house” type events (Vorts, LeChaims, Kiddushim) are not yet available at this time.
- Rental of the Shul facilities for the entire Shabbos is unavailable until further notice. Rental for Shabbos meals by members is a possibility provided the caterer can work within our setup constraints related to minyan set ups and future youth group usage of the social hall.

Moving Forward

It is expected that as vaccinations increase, and their efficacy against variants are confirmed, the guidance relating to mask wearing will evolve to allow for their more limited use. Since not everyone in the Kehila is vaccinated yet, we are currently continuing to require masks in the building for public Tefilos and open Shiurim. We strongly recommend that everyone get the vaccine, unless otherwise advised by their personal doctor, as it will become a significant and central aspect of our considerations in the evolution and progression of our policies. On April 19th, everyone over 16 became eligible for the vaccine, and they are widely available. At a certain point, it will be reasonable to assume that all adults over 16 in the Shul are past the 2 weeks post-second dose of the vaccine. This reality will significantly impact our next set of guidelines.

We are deeply aware of the challenges that these guidelines have generated for our Kehila. We are also quite aware of the broader communal approach to COVID-19 over the past number of months, and the last few weeks in particular. We feel it is our responsibility to ensure that our Kehila moves forward in returning to normal life within a safe approach that takes into account the full range of our members.

Thank you for your cooperation with these guidelines,
YIPC COVID Planning Committee