Congregation Shaarei Kodesh – Reopening Plan for religious services

Adopted by CSK Board June 9, 2021

Please read this entire document and acknowledge by clicking the link on the last page.

The synagogue re-opening will take place within a framework of Kavod HaBriyot – Honoring One Another. The guidelines incorporate established guidelines for minimizing the transmission of COVID-19. It is critical that we take stock of our collective actions order to ensure the continued health of all individuals who enter our synagogue.

The decision to attend services is an individual one. Each individual will need to carefully evaluate his/her risk factors to determine whether attending services is appropriate for that individual and in the interest of our community. Regardless of the precautions, a decision to venture into communal gatherings is not without risk. It is likely that transmission of COVID-19 will continue in our community for some time.

CSK cannot guarantee that its building or the religious services conducted within its building will be completely safe or free of risk. Regardless of precautions, it is possible that employees, congregants or visitors will be unknowing carriers of COVID-19 and transmission from one individual to another may occur. This plan utilizes a stage reopening of the building for services which takes into account local COVID-19 circumstances.

This Plan requires persons who officiate and attend religious services to be vaccinated against COVID-19. There is a halakhic obligation for Jews to vaccinate themselves and their children, unless their doctors determine that it is dangerous for that specific person to be vaccinated due to a pre-existing condition. Similarly, it is halakhically permissible for a school or a synagogue anywhere in the world to enact a takkanah or regulation that one must receive a vaccination and to prevent an unvaccinated person from entering a synagogue or a school. *See Responsa by Rabbi Prof. David Golinkin dated January 20, 2021.*

This Plan will be reviewed and revised (as appropriate) by the Task Force on a regular basis. The next meeting of the Task Force will be July 20, 2021.

Stages of Reopening

Phase	Community Health Requirements to Reach this Stage	Number of individuals permitted at services and/or percentage of occupancy	Standards for Employees, Congregants and Visitors	Service Details
One	n/a	Maximum of 10 individuals in the chapel area. Maximum of 20 individuals in the sanctuary. Outdoor Activity as separately provided.	Masks required at all times. Social distancing required. Access acknowledgment required for all congregants and visitors to the building and for outdoor services.	Online only services strongly encouraged. B'nai Mitzvah and special events permitted within capacity and distancing guidelines. Physical Space Considerations to be strictly monitored.
Two	1. Downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases in synagogue zip codes for 14 continuous days 2. Vaccination rates in Palm Beach County above 20% 3. COVID-19 positive tests consistently below 7% in Palm Beach County	Maximum of 15 individuals in chapel area. Up to 15% capacity in sanctuary (45 individuals). Actual attendance to be determined by Synagogue Director, Rabbi, President and Exec. VP. Recommend gradual increase in attendance to gain comfort with setup.	Masks required at all times. Social distancing required and seating in pods. Access acknowledgment required for all congregants and visitors to the building and for outdoor services. Fully vaccinated persons only for indoor services (full series of shot(s) plus two weeks waiting period). Voluntary disclosure of vaccine status in Wavier. No participants under age 16.	Re-evaluation of further phasing and criteria by Task Force in mid to late May. Seating may be reserved by Synagogue Director for persons with specific roles or special occasions. CSK may offer Family Service at a time other than the main service which is open to persons who are not vaccinated (including those under age 16).
Three **THIS IS THE CURRENT STAGE**	1. Downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases in synagogue zip codes for 30 continuous days 2. Vaccination rates in Palm Beach County above 30%	Maximum of 15 individuals in chapel area. Up to 30% capacity in sanctuary (90 individuals). Actual attendance to be determined by Synagogue Director,	Services for all individuals without regard to vaccination status. No restrictions as to participant ages. All participants and clergy to wear masks at all times, except if	Re-evaluation of further phasing and criteria by Task Force in mid to late July. Seating may be reserved by Synagogue Director for persons with specific roles or special occasions. Services offered virtually.

	3. COVID-19 positive tests consistently below 5% in Palm Beach County	Rabbi, President and Exec. VP.	clergy are within plexiguard area. Seating by socially distanced pods but participants may establish pods as desired. Reservations strongly requested to provide adequate seating and to solicit Waiver.	

Gating Requirements

Percentage positive COVID-19 Cases in Palm Beach County – measured via FAU data: (scroll down to chart titled Palm Beach County COVID Case Testing Positive Percentage) FAU | Palm Beach County Data

Vaccination Rates in Palm Beach County – measured via Palm Beach Post data: Palm Beach County, FL COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker | palmbeachpost.com

Physical Space Considerations (as applicable)

- Seating will provide for social distancing between groups. Families/couples, etc. will be seated together as a pod without social distancing and individuals may choose pod arrangements. Based on reservations, seats will be assigned prior to the service.

- Recommend that flow of services (i.e., Torah movement, aliyot, etc.) be managed so that distancing is maintained.

Participant Considerations

- If you do not feel well, please stay home. Remember that the health of the community is the responsibility of each of us.
- Reservation Strongly Recommended – Attendance at services by prior reservation strongly recommended as there are attendance limitations. Congregational Director will have discretion to reserve attendance for those having honors or saying kaddish.
- Attendees to sign Access Acknowledgment. This may be physical document or electronic document (particularly for Shabbat and holidays)
- Face masks are required for all attendees and clergy at services. Clergy may remove masks within plexiguard area.
- Please no handshakes, hugging, kissing, or touching those outside of your family group. The Rabbi and Hazzan will also follow these guidelines and will not be shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.
- Minimize movement around the room. To use the restroom, please leave and return directly. The only persons circulating in the room will be the Rabbi, Cantor and Ushers.
- No food or drink except as provided. Each attendee is encouraged to bring his/her own water bottle.
- Congregants will provide their own kippot and tallit. Prayer books will be provided.
- Snacks and drinks may be provided 'to go'.

Communication

Communication of the guidelines to the congregation is key. Communication should emphasize the Jewish value of preserving health and the obligations to keep neighbors and community safe. It may be appropriate to provide a forum for feedback, questions and concerns about the guidelines and procedures. Signs should be posted on all doors stating that asks are required for all individuals who enter the building. Signs should include information on how to property wear a mask.

All attendees to sign or acknowledge online the Access Acknowledgment.

Outdoor Activity

Risk of transmission of COVID-19 in outdoor spaces is reduced in comparison to indoor spaces. Keeping in mind that Florida weather can be hot, buggy and unpredictable, services may be held outdoors.

The number of individuals who may participate should be limited according to the space utilized for activity and social distancing maintained. Masks required at all times.

Outdoor activity should avoid physical touching of another individual. Ritual objects should not be passed from one individual to another. There will need to be a means of access to utilize restrooms which avoid close contact with other individuals.

Protocol for Notification

If CSK becomes aware that any person who has recently attended services or was present in the building has tested positive for COVID-19, CSK undertake best efforts to notify others who also attended services at that time. The Certification of Health required from each attendee provides a record of the individuals who attended services at CSK or were present in the building. CSK staff will telephone others who may have been in contact with the individual within 24 hours of notification of the positive test.

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