

Covid-19 Policies Effective 3-1-2024

Introduction

With significant protection, treatment and testing possibilities generally available in managing the Covid-19 virus, our community health policies are intended to allow members and staff more choice in their own health care. It is hoped that these policies better represent a greater proportion of our members' daily lives and that they better enable our coming together in community. At the same time, these policies are intended to reflect our Jewish values – that we are all responsible for one another.

High Holiday Considerations

- See CDC Covid-19 [guidelines for attending large events](#) and CDC Covid-19 [trends](#) specifically for Middlesex county.
- Winchester Town Hall seating capacity will be 455 using the main floor and both balconies. Temple Shir Tikvah seating capacity in the sanctuary will be 150 with overflow seating of 120 in the oneg room.
- In the unlikelyhood that the Covid-19 community level becomes “**high**”, masks will be required at all services.
- KN95/N95 masks will be made available at the door of all venues. Hand sanitizer will be available in the lobby and in restrooms at all venues.

Maintaining the Good Health of the Temple Community

- All members and visitors are strongly encouraged to keep up-to-date with applicable vaccinations and boosters, as eligible. See current [CDC Vaccine Recommendations](#).
- If you are feeling sick, stay home. Please do not attend any temple event in person. If you have been exposed to Covid-19, test before attending any temple event.
- Please follow the [CDC Respiratory Virus Guidelines](#) for reducing the spread of Covid-19 and other respiratory viruses.
- If you choose to wear a mask, pick a good quality one such as N95, KN95, KF94, or wear double surgical masks. Masks are available at temple entrances and in the sanctuary for anyone who forgets theirs at home.
- Windows must be opened for all temple activities, unless weather is extremely inclement, and window opening/closing is the responsibility of the activity organizer.
- Our HVAC system is upgraded to provide additional air purification and ventilation, but does not by itself ensure full protection against any infectious disease.
- Most bathroom fixtures are touch-free and hand sanitizer is available throughout the building.

Masking in the Temple Building Based on Covid-19 Community/County Levels

- The [CDC COVID-19 Community Levels](#) are monitored for each county in the U.S. on a weekly basis to determine if masking is necessary to keep our community better protected. This policy applies to all activities held at the temple building as follows:
 - **High level (red)**: Masks required - everyone must wear a mask and food may not be served.
 - **Medium level (yellow)**: Mask-friendly, but masks are strongly recommended.
 - **Low level (green)**: Mask-friendly.

“Mask-friendly” translates to “if you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, please do so”.

- Monitoring the community level allows for quick response to surging and receding viral trends among the local communities in which most of our members reside.
- Signage related to the Covid-19 community level and masking requirements is posted at the lower-level and main lobby entrances to inform everyone of masking needs when entering the building.

Here's What Else You Need to Know

- The number of attendees (including clergy, staff, and volunteers) at any service or community event held in the sanctuary is limited to **150**. The oneg room is limited to 120 for overflow seating.
- As a courtesy, a small number of seats close to the bimah in the sanctuary are reserved for mask wearers, welcoming them to sit together if that makes them feel more comfortable. This area was chosen because air flows from the front (bimah area) to the back of the room.
- Live streaming of Shabbat services is available to remote viewers on multiple platforms (temple website, Facebook, YouTube).
- A 4' aisle around our Service Production table at the rear of the sanctuary is maintained to provide the team with improved ventilation and distancing.
- Board and Administrative committee meetings may provide both in-person and streaming access to allow for remote participants.
- Except during “high” Covid-19 community levels (see above), food may be served in all gathering places of the building.

School Guidelines (Tot Shabbat, EJL and Learning Corp)

We want our students to experience our religious school programs in a way that reflects their daily school lives.

- The religious school schedule is as follows:
 - Tot Shabbat meets on the first Saturday of the month at the temple.

- EYL (Experiencing Jewish Life) meets monthly on Sundays at the Ambrose School.
- The Learning Corps Grades 1-5 meet on Sundays at the Ambrose Elementary School and Grades 6-12 meet in the temple building on Wednesdays afternoons.
- Our school follows the guidelines jointly issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Those guidelines are subject to any stricter requirements specified by the Town of Winchester or, for Grades 6-12, policies in effect when in the temple building.

B'nai Mitzvah

For “**high**” Covid Community levels, policy at the temple building is amended as follows:

- Prior to and during the service, masks are required in the sanctuary, except when speaking from the bimah and for family photographs.
- For a celebration (luncheon or party), friendly-masking and food service are allowed.
- The host family must notify guests of masking requirements and coordinate any extra arrangements with the temple office.
- The Service Production Team will provide streaming of B'nai Mitzvah services unless the clergy and family agree it is not needed.