Updated Covid Policy for Synagogue and Rabbi Jerome Weistrop Religious School

January 3, 2022 / 1 Shevat 5782

Dear Congregation Family,

As we enter this winter with the original Covid virus shadowed by the Omicron variant we are committed as ever to serving the spiritual, religious, educational and emotional needs of our congregation in a safe and inclusive manner.

The Temple office is open, we celebrated the High Holidays and several B’nai Mitzvah in person and virtually, the Rabbi Jerome Weistrop Religious School is open for in person classes and the shul is open for services as well as Zooming and Livestreaming all of our services. Our HVAC contractor is investigating the feasibility of upgrading the filters in our HVAC system.

We are committed to making the shul as safe, secure and inviting as possible within the boundaries of science as we understand it at the given moment as well as with the input of you the members of our Kehilah (community). We will continue to adapt and modify as the conditions and the science dictate. In that regard we are guided by the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as well as our own team of medical experts.

**UPDATED GUIDELINES – 1/3/22**

Given that people 5 years of age and older are eligible to receive vaccines now our current Covid policy for all events is as follows:

- Indoor programs are restricted to all participants (children and adults) who provide proof of vaccinations to the synagogue office. (2 shots received, with the second one received at least 15 days before an event)

- When in the building, either medical procedure/surgical masks or KN95 masks to be worn by all.

- When in the building a minimum of 3 feet physical distancing is required.

- Hand washing is required upon entering the building.

- No kiddush or other communal eating in the shul.

- Use of our upstairs pods is available. Contact the office.

We also have the following guidelines for the Sukkot (booths) in our sanctuary:

- Sukkot will remain in place.
- When only one person uses a sukkah for the whole service they need not wear a mask in the booth.

- When more than one person will be in a booth during a service, masks are to be worn by all while in the booth even if one person is alone in the booth.

We are requesting that all people who are vaccinated please send copies of your vax cards to the office, and send updates as appropriate. This contributes to the overall level of confidence in the community to attend services, religious school and meetings in the shul. Should you need a medical accommodation please contact the office or our President Paul Cooperstein.

**Religious School:**

Based on the advice of our medical team as well as the results of a school parent survey, we will be holding in person classes of the Jerome Weistrop Religious School. We will shift to remote learning if the Milton Public School system does so. To attend in person the following guidelines apply:

1. All students are required to be vaccinated (2 shots received, with the second one received at least 15 days before an event) .... we are mostly there! Email proof of vaccination for your child, aged 5 and older to: eddirector@bethshalombluehills.org. We encourage all eligible students to get the booster shot when available and send proof to us when received.

2. All teachers are required to be vaccinated (3 shots received, with the last shot received at least 15 days prior to the date submitted).

3. Please let your child know that we may ask them to double up on their masks until we can provide K95’s. Masks will be particularly important to bring to Religious School each time, as we sing and chant throughout the day: Havdalah, T’filah, Hebrew classes, music classes and do a lot of talking during our experiential learning! If your child needs accommodations for medical reasons, such as sensory integration, please get in touch with Cantor Lisa.

4. Stay at home if there are positive test results, any Covid symptoms, or close contacts at public/private school - until there is a negative PCR test result. Siblings of those with symptoms, positive tests, and close contacts should also stay home until a negative PCR test result is obtained.

**In the building during religious school:**

* No eating in the building. If a student needs a snack or mask break, we will offer them some time outside to distance and remove their masks. Some outdoor time will be integrated in their lessons as best as possible.
* Windows will be kept open a bit to increase fresh airflow and we will maintain 3 feet of physical distancing.

**Covid Resources**

[Click Here](#) to access our Covid Resources list for support in any area of life that you need support in.

**Support**

We are here to support all of our congregants. Our Deeds of Lovingkindness Team is ready willing and able to support any congregant with needs of any kind. If there is anything you need; technology support, a Siddur (prayer book) or Humash (Torah book), tallis, food delivery, prescription pick up, please call or email the office. Thanks to CJP, emergency financial assistance is also available from Rabbi Benjamin’s Discretionary Account. Once you let us know, we will do our best to have someone who can help. If you cannot join us in person on Shabbat join us on Zoom or Livestream. Our Saturday morning services are followed by a chat which has become a virtual Oneg opportunity to check in and schmooze with people we know and miss.

As you can imagine, as new information comes to light and our state shares new guidelines, we are ready to adjust. Feel free to reach out to either of us or any Executive Board member with any suggestions, questions or concerns.

Chazak, Chazak, V'nitchazek – Be strong, be strong and let us strengthen one another.

Paul Cooperstein, President
Alfred Benjamin, Rabbi